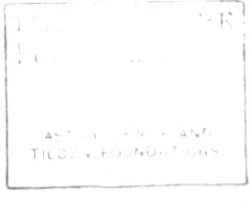
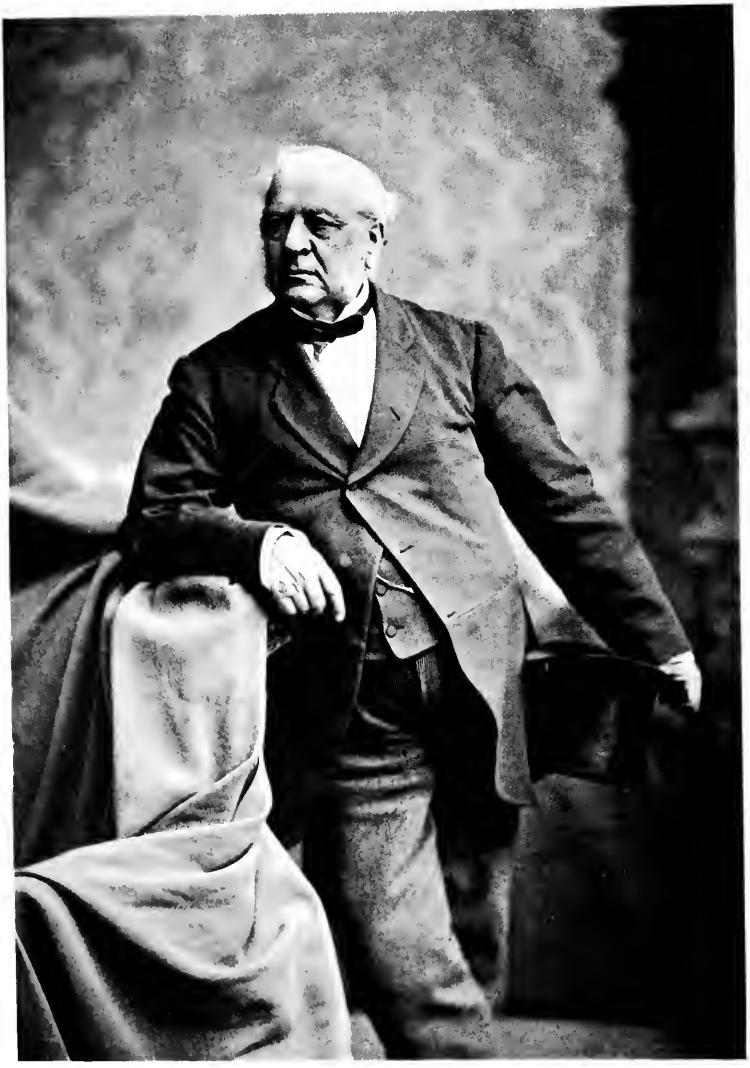
MEMOIR OF CHARLES H. RUSSELL

1796-1884

Compliments of the Author





CHARLES H. RUSSELL

1875

MEMOIR

OF

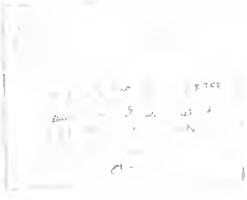
CHARLES H. RUSSELL

1796–1884

BY HIS SON

CHARLES HOWLAND RUSSELL

NEW YORK
1903




THE DE VINNE PRESS

I

Charles Handy Russell was a son of Thomas Russell, who was an officer of the Continental army in the Revolutionary War and a descendant of John Russell, of Woburn, Massachusetts.

John Russell emigrated from England in the early part of the seventeenth century. He lived at first at Charlestown and subsequently at Woburn, of which town he was one of the founders and earliest inhabitants.[1]

[1] "Woburn was originally a grant of land made, 1640, by the General Court of Massachusetts to Charlestown, and for about two years afterwards was called 'Charlestown Village.' The settlement of Charlestown, which is the most ancient town not only in the county of Middlesex, but likewise (Salem and Dorchester excepted) in the Colony of Massachusetts, as distinct from that of Plymouth, had commenced in 1629. In June of that year, Mr. Thomas Graves, a gentleman from Gravesend in Kent, eminent for his skill in surveying and engineering, and in the employ of the Massachusetts Company in London, came there from Salem, with several servants of the company under his care; laid out the town in two-acre lots; erected a large building for public purposes, called the 'Great House'; and with the consent of Gov. Endicott exchanged the Indian name of the place, Mishawum, for Charlestown, in honor of King Charles I, the then reigning monarch of Great Britain. In the year following, July, 1630, a large and select company of Puritans, who had arrived the month preceding at Salem from England, came to Charlestown, with a view to build and establish themselves there." (Sewall's "History of Woburn," pp. 7, 8.) "In the interval between the gathering of the church and the ordination of its first pastor, Woburn was incorporated as a town [1642]. Its territory was granted originally to Charlestown, on condition that it should be built on

Several of the inhabitants of Charlestown, among them being John Russell, met at the house of Mr. Thomas Graves, in Charlestown, on December eighteenth, 1640, and upon that day agreed upon a series of "Town Orders" for the proposed new town of Woburn; and these "Town Orders" are subscribed by thirty-two persons, including John Russell.[1] He

within two years. This condition had been fulfilled." (*Id.* p. 23.)

[1] Whence Woburn derived its name appears not to be known. Woburn, in Bedfordshire, in England, then was and still is the site of Woburn Abbey, the seat of the Duke of Bedford, whose family name is Russell. Sewall, the historian of Woburn, conjectures that a Richard Russell, who came to Charlestown from Herefordshire in 1640, and later became prominent in the colony, may have been a member of the family of which the Duke of Bedford was the head and that the name Woburn therefore may have been chosen out of respect for him. But this hardly seems probable, and at best is mere conjecture, as necessarily also must be any opinion as to the part which may have been taken by John Russell in the choice of the name. No Russell, other than John Russell, was among the subscribers to the "Town Orders" of 1640, above referred to, in which the new town is called "Woburn." Some of the descendants of John Russell used the goat crest, which is the crest of the Bedford Russells. This crest appears upon Jonathan Russell's seal, accompanying his signature to the treaty of Ghent in 1814 (*infra*, p. 40). Mr. Charles H. Russell in his youth understood, from family tradition, that his family was connected with the Bedford Russells, and he and his brother William from early life used the goat crest. Hastings Russell, the ninth Duke of Bedford, whom Mr. Charles H. Russell knew and to whom he sent a copy of J. R. Bartlett's work on the genealogy of the descendants of John Russell of Woburn (Providence, 1879), in which work no suggestion of any connection with the Bedford Russells is made, wrote to Mr. Russell in January, 1880: "It seems irresistible to infer, when the names of 'Russell' and 'Woburn' appear together as early as 1640, that the families are connected," and referred to

is stated by Sewall ("History of Woburn") to have been by occupation a shoemaker. He was made a freeman of the colony in 1635,[1] and was a landowner; and was one of the leading men of the town and of the community in which he lived. For many years in succession he "was chosen to the responsible office of Sealer of Leather." He was one of the Selectmen of the town of Woburn, from 1652 to 1656 inclusive. In 1664 he "was appointed on a highly respectable and important committee of seven for making distribution among the proprietors of the town 'of plow lands and swamps, and a particular division of the remote timber, according to justice and equity.' He is likewise named in the Town Records of the same year as a deacon of the Church; and, at that time, was doubtless an Orthodox Congregationalist, both in profession and practice."[2]

It was during these and the following years of the seventeenth century that the persecution of the Baptists, which constitutes a very important chapter in the history of Massachusetts and of the United States, was in progress. At that time the control of the Puritan commonwealth was practically in the hands of the clergy. That such should be the case was never the purpose of the Crown in granting the

"cousins on this side and on that side of the Atlantic," and in a later letter referred to "branches of a family divided by the Atlantic;" but there is no conclusive evidence to connect John Russell of Woburn with the English family of which the Duke of Bedford is the head. The record of the early emigrants to New England is very incomplete; and it is not as yet known to his descendants from what part of England John Russell came.

[1] N. E. Hist. Gen. Reg., Vol. XXXVI, p. 324.

[2] Sewall's "History of Woburn," p. 157.

charter, for it was intended that the franchise should be freely exercised by all who had the freedom of the Company. But the power of the clergy was, from the beginning, very great among the companies of people who emigrated from England to the Colony of Massachusetts Bay; and, undoubtedly, to a great extent, these people made the emigration rather from loyalty to their pastors than from any real inconvenience suffered by them in the practice of their religious faith in the mother country. Toleration and liberty of conscience were not ideals of seventeenth century Reformers of the type of the pastors who led the bands of Puritans to Massachusetts at this period; and there is very good reason to believe that it was their deliberate purpose to establish beyond the seas a commonwealth in which their "orthodox" church should be supreme. By the influence of the clergy, a statute was passed in Massachusetts in 1631 providing that no men should be admitted to the freedom of the body politic except such as were members of the churches.

The clergy thus had for all practical purposes the temporal power; and even the magistrates were subservient to them. But in all such conditions of society, as over and over again has been seen in the world's history, there are men whom no ecclesiastical tyranny can control, and who are fearless to teach the truth as they see it. And the ecclesiastics are thus placed in a situation in which they must crush the heresy or schism, or else lose their own power. Such was the situation of the orthodox clergy of Massachusetts in the seventeenth century, when they found themselves face to face with the Baptists, and met

men ready to die for their faith, whom no persecution could silence.

At what time John Russell's convictions led him to join the Baptists is not definitely known. It was after the persecutions had continued for some years, and after Henry Dunster had been deposed from the presidency of Harvard College because he accepted the beliefs of that sect. He was present, about 1660, at a church trial of Thomas Goold, who was a man of high standing in the community, one of the early Baptists, and later the first pastor of the Baptist Church of Charlestown and Boston; and probably he was a member of the board or committee appointed to examine Goold. One of the meetings was held at John Russell's house ("a meeting was appointed by the church the next week at Mr. Russell's." "Being met at Mr. Russell's house," etc.); and the account of the trial shows that he insisted upon fair play for Goold and endeavored to keep the chief prosecutor within proper bounds; but there is no evidence that at that time he was in sympathy with Goold's opinions.[1]

In 1668, a petition "of sundrie well affected persons" was addressed to the General Court then sitting in Boston, asking for leniency in the cases of three Baptists, who were confined in prison for having formed a church and for holding religious services otherwise than as permitted by law. This petition was signed by over sixty persons, including John

[1] Goold's narration of this trial is given in Backus' History of the Baptists, Vol. I (the first edition), pp. 359 *et seq.*, and in Wood's "History of the First Baptist Church of Boston," pp. 42 *et seq.*

Russell; or, as he signed himself, and as he appears then and since to have been more commonly known, "John Russell, senr.," to distinguish him from his son, John Russell, Junior. The list of signers is said by historical writers to include many of the most respected citizens of the time. The petition, after referring to the unhappy condition of the prisoners, says: "The sence of this their parsonall and family most deplorable and afflicted condition hath sadlie affected the harts of maney sober and serious Christians, that in themselves neither approve of their judgm^{ts} nor practis, yet considering the men are reputed godly and civill, and peaceable in their conversations, and the thinges wherein they differ being circomstantiall and disputable among learned, sober and pious men, and your pore prisoners professing that they cannot in Conscience doe what is required of them, Now therefore that they may not be exposed to sin or suffer for conscience sake we most humbly beseech this honored Court in their Christian mercy and bowels of Compassion to pittie and release these poore prisoners, whose suffering cause being doubtful to maney, and grevious to sundrie of God's people at home and abroad, may crave a further consideration," etc., etc.[1] The General Court was very much displeased by this petition, which the House of Deputies characterized as "scandalous & reproachful"; and those of the signers who were considered to have been the most active in preparing the petition and in procuring signatures to it were fined, while others were forced to express their regrets in writing and to make their excuses and apolo-

[1] Massachusetts Archives, Vol. X, p. 221.

gies. But John Russell's name is not among either of these.

A return of the constables of Charlestown to a warrant, directing them " to look after persons meeting together upon the Lord's Day in a disorderly way and to return the names of which," shows that John Russell was present at a religious meeting at the house of Thomas Goold, at Charlestown, on Sunday, the seventh of March, 1669.[1] Towards the end of the year 1669 or the early part of 1670 he was admitted a member of the Baptist Church of Boston, and soon afterwards was chosen an elder of that church. In a letter from Edward Drinker, a leading member of that church and one of its founders, addressed to the Baptist Church at Newport, November thirtieth, 1670, it is said: " The Lord has given us another elder, one John Russell, senior, a gracious, wise and holy man that lives at Woburn, where we have five brethren near that can meet with him; and they meet together First days, when they cannot come to us; and I hear there are some more there looking that way with them." [2]

" In 1670 he is called Elder Russell, and it is known that he gathered around him a considerable group of brethren in Woburn and Billerica, and preached to them on the Lord's Day when it was inconvenient for them to meet with the church in Boston. At times also he preached to the church itself, when Pastor Goold was unable to fill his office. He seems to have been a ' teaching elder,' but was

[1] Middlesex Court Record. Wood's " History of the First Baptist Church of Boston," p. 90.

[2] Backus' History of the Baptists, Vol. I, p. 400.

never pastor of the church. He is called 'a gracious, wise and holy man,' and was greatly beloved by his fellow-disciples. He was a patient, quiet, sagacious man, who bore his trials with an equable and Christian temper." [1]

In 1671 several citizens of Woburn were indicted for publicly manifesting contempt for the ordinance of infant baptism and for attending the assemblies of the Baptists (or "Anabaptists," as they were called), which were prohibited by law. Some of them were publicly admonished, or discharged upon promise of change of conduct. "One deemed more irreclaimable than the rest (viz: John Russell, Senr.) was bound over to the Court of Assistants, then the Supreme Court of the Colony, for a final decision upon his case." [2] This was in December, 1671. He had been indicted by the grand jury in October preceding.[3] "The persecuting spirit begins to stir again. Elder Russell and his son and Brother Foster are presented to the court that is to be this month." [4] Sewall says: "It seems but reasonable to conclude that all belonging to Woburn, who had been summoned before the civil tribunals for their Baptist sentiments and practices, Dec. 1671, except John Russell, Senr., and John Russell, Jr., his son, either renounced those sentiments and practices as erroneous, or else that they worshipped

[1] Wood's "History of the First Baptist Church of Boston," pp. 101, 102. Snow's "History of Boston," p. 151.

[2] Sewall's "History of Woburn," p. 155.

[3] Middlesex Court Original Papers. Wood's "History of the First Baptist Church of Boston," p. 102.

[4] From letter of Benjamin Sweetser, December 10, 1671, quoted in Backus' History of the Baptists, Vol. I, p. 404.

unitedly with their Congregational brethren, while they lived, not accounting the differences between them as essential. . . . But there was one person indicted as above, whose resolute spirit no opposition could subdue, no suffering could break down or cause to swerve from the path which he deemed to be right." And this one person, as he goes on to mention, was "John Russell, Senr." [1]

Even before he had become a member of the Baptist church, "he had become remiss in his attendance upon public worship at Woburn, was wont to turn his back at the ministration of infant baptism, and refused to partake with the church there, of which he then was or recently had been both a member and an officer, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Upon these charges, and likewise for joining the Baptist Church in Boston, which had not been regularly gathered according to the laws of the Colony, and for accepting the eldership among them . . . he was summoned and tried before the Court of Quarter Sessions at Charlestown, December 19, 1671, and by that Court he was bound over, as we have seen, to appear before the Court of Assistants at their next session." [2] It appears from the official records that, before the Court of Assistants, he admitted that he had joined the Baptists and had become a teaching officer among them, and that he refused "to promise for aftertimes to refrayne frequenting theaforesayd disallowed meeting." He

[1] Sewall's "History of Woburn," p. 157.

[2] Sewall's "History of Woburn," p. 158. Middlesex Court Record, Vol. III, p. 14. Wood's "History of the First Baptist Church of Boston," pp. 102, 103.

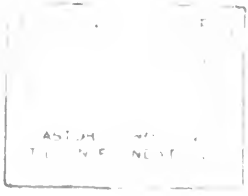
was accordingly committed to prison at Cambridge, "there to remayne w^th^out bayle or mainprise till the Generall Court take further order therein, Vnless in the mean Tyme he doe engage by solemne promise to some two of the magistrates of Midlesex to desist from his irregular scandelous practises and attend the publick worship of God on the Lord's dayes in the place where he lives, which he refusing to preforme warrant issued out for his Comittment accordingly."[1] This was on March fifth, 1672. On May thirtieth, being then in prison, he petitioned the General Court to grant him a speedy trial.[2]

It was commonly reported at the time that John Russell, under the rigors and cruelty to which such prisoners were subjected, had died in prison. He certainly suffered severely, and was so greatly reduced in health that it was supposed that he could not live; but his spirit remained unbroken. In order that he might recover his health, he was released on bail; and we find him again petitioning the General Court to grant him a speedy trial, or, in case that request should not be granted, that the sureties upon his bond might be discharged. A date was set for his trial; but it then appearing that by reason of his illness he could not attend, his sureties were discharged;[3] and it does not appear that subsequently he was tried. It is uncertain how long he was in prison. In Snow's "History of Boston," it is said, in a reference to him: "This Mr. Russell and

[1] Massachusetts Archives, Vol. X, p. 229.
[2] Massachusetts Archives, Vol. X, p. 230.
[3] Massachusetts Archives, Vol. X, p. 231.

CHARLES H. RUSSELL

About 1815



another of their members of the name of Foster were confined in prison for nearly six months in 1672." His second petition for a speedy trial, which is not dated, was acted upon by the Deputies of the General Court on October twenty-first, 1672. In it he mentions his having been released on bail. In a letter from William Hamlit, a Baptist, June fourteenth, 1672, he is spoken of thus: "I perceive you have heard as if our brother Russell had died in prison. Through grace he is yet in the land of the living, and out of prison bonds; but is in a doubtful way as to recovery of his outward health; but we ought to be quiet in the good will and pleasure of our God, who is only wise." [1] From the foregoing facts it appears that he was committed to prison on the fifth of March and was released on bail at some time before the fourteenth of June.

Soon afterwards the authorities seem to have realized the impossibility of crushing the Baptists; but more or less persecution still continued. Sentences of imprisonment and of banishment were no longer imposed; but the holding of their religious services was interfered with, and fines were imposed. On June twenty-fifth, 1675, "John Russell, Sen^{r} appearing before the Court to answ^{r} the p^{r}sentm^{t} of the Grand Jury for not attending the Publ: worship of God on Lords Dayes & etc., and by his owne confession in open Court being convicted of constant & ordinary frequenting the meeting of the Anabaptists on the Lords Dayes & etc., is sentenced to pay a fine of five pounds & costs eight shillings & six pence." At the

[1] Backus' History of the Baptists, Vol. I, p. 405.

same Court, John Russell, Junior, was fined forty shillings and six shillings costs, for the same offence.[1]

John Russell, Senior, died at Woburn, June first, 1676. He left two children: John Russell, Junior, and Mary, wife of Timothy Brooks (or, as she is called in his will, Mary Brooke). His will is filed in Middlesex County.[2]

John Russell, Junior, joined the Baptist Church earlier than his father. He may have followed his father's trade of shoemaker; and he was repeatedly chosen Sealer of Leather at Woburn. He was received into the first Baptist church, either in Charlestown or Boston, in 1667 or 1668. In letters to that church from other churches and ministers of the same denomination outside of Massachusetts (as quoted in Backus' History of the Baptists) he is repeatedly mentioned with his father in their salutations and in terms of respect and affection. He also was obnoxious to the civil authorities, and was presented to the Court of Quarter Sessions in December, 1671, at the same time as his father; but probably was not committed to prison. He became a "teaching elder" in July, 1678; and on July twenty-eighth, 1679,

[1] Middlesex Court Record. Wood's "History of the First Baptist Church of Boston," p. 123.

[2] "The descendants of Elder John Russell, Senr., who continued in Woburn, seem not to have retained his peculiar sentiments as a Baptist, but to have been of the Congregational persuasion, . . . but a granddaughter of Elder Russell, Senr., by his daughter Mary Brooks, wife of Timothy Brooks of Woburn, was married at Swansea to a gentleman by the name of Mason, by whom she had three sons, Job, Russell and John Mason, all of whom were esteemed preachers of the Baptist persuasion in their day." (Sewall's "History of Woburn," p. 161.)

after the death of Thomas Goold, the first pastor, he was ordained minister of the Baptist Church in Boston, and at that time removed his residence from Woburn to Boston. He died there in December, 1680, aged forty years.[1] His gravestone is in the King's Chapel churchyard in Boston. The persecutions continued during his lifetime; and in March, 1680, the doors of his meeting-house were closed and "nailed up" by the authorities.[2] Shortly before his death, he wrote a reply to an attack upon the Baptists contained in a work by Increase Mather, published in 1680, and called: "The Divine Right of Infant Baptisme Asserted and Proved from Scripture and Antiquity." John Russell, Junior's, reply was entitled: "A Brief Narrative of some Considerable Passages Concerning the First Gathering and further Progress of a Church of Christ in Gospel Order in Boston, in New England, Commonly (though falsely) called by the name of Anabaptists; for clearing their innocency from the Scandalous things laid to their charge. Set forth by John Russell, an Officer of the said Church, with Consent of the whole. Dated in Boston, 20th, 3d Month, 1680." Being approved by his church, it was sent to London and there published, with a preface written by six noted Baptist ministers of London. This reply of John Russell, Junior, is admirably written. It shows him to have been a man of education; its literary style and its arguments are excellent; and it is remarkable

[1] Apparently he died without a will. Administration was granted to his widow, Sarah Champney Russell; and an inventory of his real and personal estate is filed in Middlesex County.

[2] Backus' History of the Baptists, Vol. I, p. 488.

for the calmness and Christian spirit which pervade it, at a time when religious controversies were almost invariably marked by bitterness and vituperation. In these respects it is in marked contrast to the work of Increase Mather, to which it was a reply, and to the pamphlet of Samuel Willard, which followed it.

John Russell, Junior's, "Narrative" led to the publication in Boston, in 1681, after his death, of the celebrated pamphlet entitled: "Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam" ("Let the cobbler stick to his last"), by Samuel Willard, minister of a Congregational church in Boston, with an introduction by Increase Mather. This pamphlet is constantly referred to by historians of the period as a frank and emphatic expression of the bigotry and intolerant spirit of the orthodox clergy.[1]

In a letter written by Samuel Sewall, at Boston, December twenty-seventh, 1680, he says: "Mr. Russell, y^{e} Anabaptist Minister, was buried last Wednesday, scarce having time to read his little piece writt. in Defence of y^{t} Sect, in opposition to Mr. Mather's *Divine Right of Infant Baptisme,* w^{ch} came over Printed (I suppose) in ye last ship." (N. E. Hist. Gen. Reg., Vol. XXIV, p. 123.)

Dr. Wood, in the "History of the First Baptist

[1] Only two copies of John Russell, Junior's, work are known to be in existence. One is in the possession of the Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. One was sold some years ago at the Brinley sale of books. A verbatim copy is given in Wood's "History of the First Baptist Church of Boston."

Copies of Increase Mather's "The Divine Right of Infant Baptisme" and of "Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam" are in the Lenox Library in New York.

Church of Boston," says of John Russell, Junior: "He may have been a cobbler, but there is no evidence whatever of it except the fact that he was a leather dealer, which would be very slight evidence indeed. He was a man of singular discretion and of a good education." It seems very likely, however, that he may have been a shoemaker, at least in his youth, as that was the trade of his father.

Concerning John Russell, Junior, the Rev. Isaac Backus, the historian of the Baptists, says: "It is evident that the gifts and graces of Elder Russell were not small; and his memory is precious." [1]

John Russell, father and son, did not live to see the great principle of religious liberty, for which they contended, recognized and established; but before many years after their deaths religious persecution ceased in Massachusetts, and thereafter men were free to worship God according to their consciences and to practice and teach their faith unmolested. The Russells and their associates bore imprisonment, fines, cruelty, abuse and misrepresentation, in the fearless struggle which they made for liberty of conscience and religious toleration; and yet they wished to force no man to their way of thinking; all that they claimed for themselves was the same freedom which they wished others to have. The combined forces of the state, the church and society were arrayed against them; they seem indeed poor and weak in comparison; but nothing mortal could crush them, and in the end their cause was victorious. Whe-

[1] "Messrs. Joseph, William and Jonathan Russell, now [1777] noted traders in Providence, are of his posterity." (Backus' History of the Baptists, Vol. I, p. 492.)

ther or not we agree with their opinions about infant baptism, the principle of religious liberty for which they were willing to sacrifice everything is the noblest one for which men have ever contended upon this continent. Without it, civil liberty would be a mere name and of no value. Religious liberty has been so long established as a fundamental principle of American political and social life that the labors and sufferings of those to whom we owe this blessing are almost forgotten. But their names should be held in everlasting gratitude by their countrymen and by all lovers of humanity.

John Russell, Junior, had eight children, among them a son Joseph, who lived in Boston, and died there in 1713. Joseph Russell was seriously considered as a successor to his father as pastor of the Baptist Church. He is mentioned as having " gifts that may tend to edification if improved." Evidently he preferred to engage in business; but he and his wife Mary were members of the Baptist Church in Boston, and one of their sons was a deacon of that church. In the possession of the church, which has existed without interruption since its organization in 1665, are two silver communion cups, given to it in 1714, one marked: " Ex dono J. & M. Russell, 1714," and the other: " Ex dono Mary Russell to ye Church." In his will, filed in Suffolk County, Joseph Russell describes himself as " shopkeeper." He left to each of his nine children three hundred pounds; to his wife his dwelling-house and land for her life, and upon her death to his children; and to his wife the residue of his estate. The will of

his widow Mary Russell, who died in 1715, also is filed in Suffolk County.[1]

Among Joseph Russell's children was a son named Thomas, who also lived in Boston, and was engaged in business and died there in 1760. The gravestones of Joseph Russell and of his wife Mary and of his son Thomas Russell are in the King's Chapel churchyard.

[1] "Inventory of Ye Estate of Mr. Joseph & Mary Russell Deceas[d] Boston April 11[th] 1715.

Shop Goods	3935	13	11
Household Ditto	116	15	5
Plate 197 oz at 8[s] per oz	79	2	
House and Land	500		
Negro Woman	20		
Cash	35		
	£4686	11	4"

(From Suffolk County Probate Records.)

II

Thomas Russell, the father of Charles Handy Russell, was the youngest of seven sons and eight children of the above-named Thomas Russell, and was born in Boston in 1758. His mother's maiden name was Honora Loud. She was a descendant of Elder William Brewster of the *Mayflower,* and is said to have been a handsome woman. She was noted in Boston for her zeal and enthusiasm in the cause of American independence, which she boldly advocated even in the presence of the highest British officers. It is said that Dr. Warren called upon her, on his way to the battle of Bunker Hill. Thomas was pursuing his studies in Boston at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Soon afterwards he went to Providence, and made his home with his brother Jonathan Russell, who was a merchant in that town, and with whom he became a clerk; but he was anxious to enter the military service, and his brothers gave their consent.[1] He served for two short periods

[1] Several of the elder brothers of Thomas Russell made Providence their residence. Besides Jonathan, his brothers Joseph and William were successful merchants and ship-owners there, and were extensively engaged in foreign commerce.

"Joseph Russell was a merchant of Providence, associated with his brother William. If we can form an opinion from the advertisements of the house of Joseph and William Russell in the 'Providence Gazette,' from the middle of the last century to the close of the Revolutionary War, we should place them among the largest mercantile houses of the Colony. In 1785

of active service in the Rhode Island militia, and in October, 1777, being then just nineteen years of age, received from General Washington a commission as ensign in Colonel Henry Sherburne's regiment of infantry in the Continental army. This regiment of regular Continental infantry was recruited chiefly in Massachusetts, from which State Thomas Russell was appointed, but it contained also a considerable number of officers and men from Rhode Island and Connecticut. Colonel Sherburne was an able and distinguished officer, and his regiment was noted for its excellence in drill and discipline.

Thomas Russell is said to have been a handsome young fellow, with long, flowing hair, which he cut off when he became a soldier. The regiment served in New York until the summer of 1778, when it was ordered to Rhode Island and took part in the campaign of that year under General Sullivan. In the "battle of Rhode Island," August twenty-ninth,

he was State Senator, then termed Assistant. He was also interested in the cause of education, and was one of the Trustees of Rhode Island College, now Brown University. . . . The 'Providence Gazette' of the day has the following notice of him: 'The Honorable Joseph Russell died at his seat in Woodstock on 18th May [1792], in the sixtieth year of his age. He was for many years an eminent merchant in this town, and acquired a handsome fortune. He sustained sundry offices of public trust with singular integrity. . . . As a man of business, he was industrious and punctual; as a Christian, a regular observer of public worship in the Episcopal Church. His merit as a good citizen and an honest man is universally acknowledged, and his charity to the poor and compassion for the distressed were among the amiable traits in his character as a gentleman.'" . . . (From J. R. Bartlett's genealogy of the descendants of John Russell of Woburn, Providence, 1879.)

William Russell also was a trustee of Rhode Island College.

1778, which La Fayette called "the best fought action of the war," the brigade of which Thomas Russell's regiment formed a part held the right of the American line. Washington afterwards complimented General Sullivan upon the "gallant behavior" of the American forces in that battle, and Congress voted its thanks to them for the "fortitude and bravery displayed." The regiment remained in Rhode Island until the following year, when it joined the main army under General Washington, in New Jersey. In November, 1779, Thomas Russell, who had been constantly with his regiment and at that time was its adjutant, was appointed aide-de-camp to General Stark. In July, 1780, he was promoted to be lieutenant. He continued to be aide-de-camp to General Stark until near the end of the year 1780, when the latter relinquished his command. Thomas Russell then rejoined his regiment. He was on duty in New Jersey until late in the summer of 1780, and thereafter in New York. Upon the reduction of the Continental army by Congress, he was retired, in 1781, after over three years of continuous active service.[1]

[1] "Once, when on duty, he narrowly escaped death by a cannon-ball. . . . He was a man of fine personal appearance. His genial and affable nature attached to him many friends; and, being a gentleman of cultured tastes, as well as of a brave and chivalrous spirit, he soon became an esteemed and trusted member of the military families to which he was successively attached. He was in the naval service for a while, but of his experience no record has been preserved." (From the volume of "Proceedings of the Rhode Island Historical Society, 1873–74," in which the foregoing reference to Thomas Russell is made, in connection with the publication of a letter written by him on January twentieth, 1778, at "Fish-Kill," where he

Thomas Russell's brothers William and Jonathan, and a son of his brother Joseph, named Joseph Dolbear Russell, all served as officers in the military service in the Revolutionary War. The last-named was aide-de-camp to General Sullivan at the battle of Rhode Island. "Samuel Russell of Woburn, son of Jesse, was wounded in the shoulder at the fight in Charlestown, June 17, 1775, and brought home and died of his wounds and a fever." (Diary of Samuel Thompson, N. E. Hist. Gen. Reg., Vol. XXXIV, p. 399.) This was the battle of Bunker Hill. Jesse Russell was a great-great-grandson of John Russell, Senior.

In 1783 Thomas Russell was married, at Trinity Church, in Newport, to Ann Handy, daughter of Charles Handy, who was a prominent merchant and landowner there. He was a grandson of Samuel Handy, a native of England, who settled in Somerset County, in Maryland, where he died in 1721, and who was a tobacco-planter. Charles Handy removed to Rhode Island, and made his home at Newport.

was then on duty. The name of the writer of the article is not given. Several letters, written by Thomas Russell during his military service, are in the possession of his descendants.)

A Mr. William Wilkinson, of Providence, in some reminiscences given in 1848, he then being about eighty-eight years old, stated that he and Thomas Russell sailed together as volunteers in the privateer *Dean*, for about four months, in 1781. There were six volunteers. "We were all in one mess, had a good time, and were all well and happy. . . . Russell was a little older than myself. We slept in the same hammock. When he was out I was in. Our mess had charge of the quarter-deck guns, three always on watch and three below; four guns, four-pounders. . . . We had an easy time on board the ship . . . and did not have to do duty under the boatswain."

His residence in Pelham Street still stands in good preservation, and until within a recent period still had behind it a large old-fashioned garden. Four well-known streets in Newport bear the names of four of his sons, John, William, Levin and Thomas, and were laid out through lands which belonged to him.

Charles Handy's wife was Ann Brown, daughter of Captain John Brown, a distinguished merchant and ship-owner of Newport.[1] John Brown's father

[1] In "Biographical sketches of distinguished members of the Newport Artillery," published in the "Newport Mercury," 1877, the following reference is made to John Brown:

"The third name on the Artillery Company's roll is that of John Brown. He and his brother Peleg were extensive merchants. They were contemporaries of Godfrey Malbone, and were largely engaged in maritime commerce. One of his daughters married Charles Handy, the grandfather of Charles H. and William H. Russell, well-known Newporters. John Brown was extensively engaged in privateering. The history of the *Revenge,* under her various commanders, would fill a volume and be as interesting and as romantic as the story of the *Bon Homme Richard.* The *Revenge* went through three wars. Besides her, he had the *Triton,* the *Victory,* the *Castor,* the *Pollux,* the *Prince William,* the *King George,* the *Britannia,* the *Queen Elizabeth,* the *Mary,* the *Patience.* This was the war which began in 1740."

An examination of the list of privateers from Newport in this war, commonly known as the "French and Spanish War," and of their owners, shows that Godfrey Malbone, John Bannister, his brother Peleg Brown and others had interests with him; and the vessels appear to have been fitted out from 1740 to 1745.

Dr. Henry E. Turner, of Newport, who was a recognized authority upon questions of local history and genealogy, believed that John Brown, the father of Mrs. Charles Handy, was a great-grandson of Chad Brown (or Browne), who was a companion of Roger Williams, and was well known as one of the

(also named John Brown) was a merchant and a man of influence in the colony. His mother was a daughter of the colonial Governor John Cranston, and her mother was a daughter of the colonial Governor Jeremiah Clarke. His wife was Jane Lucas. She was born at St. Malo in France, and was a daughter of Augustus Lucas, a French Protestant, who left France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, with his wife and child. Augustus Lucas settled at Newport, and became a freeman of the colony of Rhode Island in 1707.[1]

The Browns and the Handys were Episcopalians. Charles Handy's prayer-book, with the prayers for the King crossed out in ink with vigorous strokes, is in the possession of one of his descendants. He was at various times a vestryman and a churchwarden of Trinity Church at Newport.[2] Two of his sons,

leading early colonists of Rhode Island (1636). See also the statements to the same effect of the genealogical tables contained in the volume entitled "The Chad Browne Memorial," published in 1888.

[1] He had a son, Augustus Lucas, Junior, who was born in America. The latter also became a freeman of the colony of Rhode Island, and later lived at Fairfield, Connecticut. In the inventory of Augustus Lucas, Junior's, estate are mentioned the following articles, which undoubtedly had belonged to his father, and which Mr. Henry L. Mills, historian, of Fairfield, thus describes: "Silver-hilted sword and belt, pocket pistols, pair silver spurs, and French common prayer-book, which indicates that he was a gentleman and a Huguenot."

[2] "Before the War of the Revolution . . . in Newport, the principal families there were highly aristocratic in their manners. They possessed little sympathy for their fellow-citizens. The families of Brenton, Malbone, Wanton, Simon Pease, Charles Handy, the Bannisters, Freebody, and others, were of this caste." (Updike's "History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett, Rhode Island," p. 433.)

Charles and John, were officers in the Revolutionary army. Thomas Russell became intimate with them during his military service in Rhode Island; and afterwards, having been invited by the brothers to visit them at their father's house at Newport, he there met the young lady who became his wife.[1]

For a long period prior to the Revolution, Newport had been a place of great activity in business. Its commerce at one time rivalled that of New York, and it employed about two hundred vessels in foreign trade, besides several hundred coasting vessels. The population is said to have been of from ten to eleven thousand. The war, however, and especially the long occupation of the town by the British forces, had left it with a reduced population and greatly diminished business, and its commerce had almost entirely disappeared. Under these circumstances, Thomas Russell and his wife removed to Philadelphia, where he engaged in business and they resided until 1785, when they returned to Newport and made their home in what was later known as the "Devens House," in Mary Street, which belonged

[1] One of these brothers was Brigade-Major John Handy. "During the Revolutionary War he did good service under Sullivan and Spencer. On the 20th of July, 1776, he read the Declaration of Independence from the steps of the State House [in Newport]—a solemn day with the people, for they were launching upon a stormy sea, with but a glimmer of the light they hoped to reach. Fifty years from that day [July 4, 1826] Major Handy was again called upon to read the same document from the same place. On this occasion, the steps were dressed with flowers, and there was general rejoicing." (From "Reminiscences of Newport," by George C. Mason, 1884.)

CHARLES H. RUSSELL

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to Charles Handy, and which still stands, although recently much altered. By the will of Charles Handy this house was given to his daughter.[1] After his return to Newport, Thomas Russell engaged in foreign trade, and made voyages to Europe and to China.[2]

Although his active service as a soldier was ended, he appears still to have taken an interest in military affairs. In 1792 he was second lieutenant of the Newport Artillery Company. In 1794, 1795 and 1796 he was Brigade Inspector of the Rhode Island militia for Newport and Bristol counties.[3] In a let-

[1] Extract from the will of Charles Handy, July 12, 1793: "Also I give and devise to my daughter Ann Russell, wife of Thomas Russell, the dwelling-house wherein they now live and the lot whereon it now stands in said Newport, formerly owned by Capt. John Brown, and also forty acres of land in Middletown which I purchased of Samuel Tompkins, to her my said daughter Ann during her life, and after her decease to her children then living, equally to be divided as tenants in common, to them and their heirs and assigns forever. Also, I give and devise to my said daughter Ann Russell all my cow commons, with all the privileges thereto belonging, being thirteen, on the Island of Nantucket in the State of Massachusetts, to her heirs and assigns forever. I also give and bequeath to my said daughter Ann Russell four thousand silver dollars."

[2] In a letter from Dr. Solomon Drowne, of Providence, to his wife, who was a sister of Thomas Russell, dated at "Marietta, at the confluence of Ohio and Muskingum, December 31st, 1788," he writes: "There is a great profit to be made by trading with the Indians in skins, etc. I think I have heard Thomas Russell say he had half a share here; if so, you may give him a hint that I think he can trade to better advantage here than in Newport." (From the "Magazine of American History," April, 1883.)

[3] "Civil and Military List of Rhode Island, 1647–1800," by J. J. Smith.

ter written by his daughter Ann, in 1884, giving recollections of her father, she says:

"Our father was an officer of the first artillery company in Newport; the dress was blue faced with scarlet. Afterwards all the Revolutionary officers in Newport formed a company of horse. . . . I recollect a number of their names, although I think I was not a dozen years old: General Martin, Colonel Tew, Captain Holt, Colonel Frank Malbone, Colonel Champlin, Major Russell, and others I cannot recollect. The uniform was very rich: blue faced with buff, with buff small clothes and vest, gold epaulets, and gold-hilted swords, with crimson sashes. My father rode a gray horse."

Thomas Russell was commonly called Major Russell; and the title probably was a complimentary one attached to the position which he held as a staff-officer during a considerable part of his active military service.

A writer of "Reminiscences of Old Newport" in the "Newport Mercury," November, 1873, thus describes the uniform of the Newport Artillery Company as it was just after the Revolutionary War:

"The uniform of the Artillery then was the old Revolutionary broad-skirted, long blue coat, faced with red, with white vest and small clothes and long black gaiters, a cocked hat with a black feather plume tipped with red, with pretty wide white belts from the shoulders crossed to the hips, with a wooden cartridge box on the right side, covered with leather, with a long leather cover that came down below the bottom of the box; on the left side was the bayonet sheath; the hair was worn clubbed behind and powdered; powder and pomatum were once two indispensable ingredients in

making up the dress of a soldier. There used to be a fine for appearance on parade without the hair being powdered."[1]

Charles Handy Russell, the third child and second son of Thomas and Ann Russell, was born at Newport on September 13, 1796.

[1] "It was in 1792 determined, if not to reorganize, to reinforce the Artillery Company. At this time a new roster was made up and many new names were added to the roll; among them was the name of Thomas Russell, who had been an active, efficient officer during the Revolution, and who, soon after the close of the war, had married Ann, the daughter of Charles Handy. . . . Mr. Russell left two sons, viz.: Charles H. Russell, who at the time of his father's decease was under five years of age, and William H. Russell, who was younger. These two sons have occupied a large space in the mercantile and material affairs of the country. Their lives of eminent usefulness, their large intelligence and unspotted names bespeak the character of the mother to whose training they were subjected. She was both a worthy and a fortunate mother, for she made the community her debtor for the sons she gave it." (From the "Newport Mercury," December 6, 1879.)

III

Thomas Russell died in 1801, in his forty-third year. His widow was left with four children, Ann, Thomas,[1] Charles and William. In the autumn of 1802 she removed with her family to Bristol, which was the home of the family until her death in 1807, and for a short time afterwards. The care of the two younger boys, after their mother's death, fell upon their sister, who was twelve years older than Charles, and upon the Reverend Alexander V. Griswold, then rector of St. Michael's Church in Bristol, who afterwards became Bishop of the "Eastern Diocese," and who was their guardian. Mr. Russell always had the greatest affection and respect for Bishop Griswold; and letters written by the latter to him, which have been preserved, and the carefully kept accounts which are included in some of them, show that Mr. Griswold was in the habit of constantly advising his young ward and of watching over his interests with care and devotion.

Charles went to school at the Bristol Academy, of which Abner Alden, the editor of the spelling-book, was then the master. As a boy he was very fond of out-of-door sports, and especially of anything of a

[1] Thomas Handy Russell was a sailor, as was so commonly the case with the young men of Providence, Newport, and Bristol. In the War of 1812, he was a lieutenant on the famous privateer brig *Yankee,* of Bristol (160 tons, 18 guns, 110 men). He died at Matanzas, in Cuba, in 1819, being then in his twenty-eighth year and the captain of a merchantman.

military character. A boy's uniformed military company was organized in Bristol in 1808, and he became the captain of it.

His mother's desire was that Charles should go to college, and that he should become a clergyman. But he always, from his early boyhood, longed to be a merchant; and the following circumstances led to his desire being gratified. One day, in 1808, then being about twelve years old, he was sent on an errand from Bristol to the island of Rhode Island. On his way home a gentleman driving a chaise took him in with him, and asked him who he was, and on being told said that he had known his mother and knew many members of his family well. He was Mr. William Blodget, Junior, a merchant of Providence, of the house of Blodget and Power. Mr. Blodget enjoyed his talk with the boy, and on parting told him to let him know in case he ever could be of service to him. This interview and the friendliness of Mr. Blodget were not forgotten, and the desire to go into business and to make his own way becoming confirmed, he determined, in 1809, to write to Mr. Blodget, recalling himself to him, and asking him if he could find him a place; and with the aid of his good sister he wrote him a letter. Soon came a reply, beginning with the cordial words: "Yes, I recollect well, and with pleasure, the smart little lad I took into my chaise last Summer at Bristol Ferry." Mr. Blodget expressed regret that there was no vacancy in his own counting-room, but promised to make inquiries; and a second letter soon afterwards followed, stating that he had been able to find a place for him with "Mr. Charles Potter, a respectable dealer in

English merchandise," who, he wrote, " will receive you on trial and, should you meet his expectations and my representations in your behalf, will duly receive you as an apprentice, allowing the usual conditions here of boarding. These are the best terms given, and the same on which all of our young gentlemen are taken."

This plan received the approval of his guardian, the Reverend Mr. Griswold, whose good counsel and careful arrangements that the boy should have sufficient means for his support and comfort in his new life illustrate the thoughtful attention which he gave to everything which concerned the boy's welfare. He went to Providence on the twenty-third of March, 1809.

Mr. Charles Potter was engaged in the importation and sale of dry-goods. He was then unmarried, but later was married to Miss Eliza Rodman, daughter of Captain William Rodman, of Providence. His store was then in Market Square. He was at that time living in lodgings, and took Charles home to live with him. Later in 1809 the latter had lodgings with a fellow-clerk.

He began his work at the foot of the ladder in Mr. Potter's office, and devoted himself faithfully to it. His life during the following years appears to have been one of satisfaction to him. He worked hard, rising rapidly in the importance and responsibility of the duties entrusted to him, and even as a subordinate studying ways in which the business could be developed and increased. He devoted himself so well and intelligently to his work that before many years had passed Mr. Potter relied greatly

upon him and upon his opinion and judgment. Even as early as April, 1810, when he was only thirteen years old, Mr. Potter wrote to him from New York, with instructions in relation to certain commercial paper, etc., as though to a man of mature years. The quaint, old-fashioned style of the letter, and the "Dear sir," and "Your obedient servant," from the head of an important business to a boy employee of thirteen, are interesting. Evidently, even at that age he was entrusted with considerable responsibility.

Providence at that time had a population of from ten to twelve thousand inhabitants, and, like other old New England towns, had a distinct importance and character of its own, such as belonged to a state of things which is now past and gone. The difficulties of travel caused each large town to be itself a little metropolis. Then and for many years afterwards Boston and other cities were reached only by the stage-coaches, and New York by the stage-coaches and the sailing packets. There were a number of men of prominence in Providence at that time, and an intelligent and agreeable society; and several of the men of the Revolutionary period were still active and leaders in the community.

The War of 1812, which occurred during the period of Mr. Russell's residence in Providence, was very unpopular there as elsewhere in New England, and it is said that when the news of the declaration of war was received in Providence, "the bells were tolled and the flags floated at half mast." But the attack upon Stonington and other places along the coast, and the appearance of the British ships of war

off Newport, excited the patriotism of the entire community and united all parties in the common defence. Fortifications were erected at Providence, and Mr. Russell as a volunteer took his turn of duty in them. Upon a visit to Newport, during this period, he saw a British frigate keeping the blockade at the entrance to the harbor. Mr. Russell became at about this time a member of the Independent Company of Cadets of Providence, of which later he was an officer. Upon the declaration of peace in 1815, the town was illuminated and there was great rejoicing.

During the years of Mr. Russell's life in Providence, which were from 1809 to 1825, he had many friends, and took his part as a young man in the social life of the place. He had an earnest purpose to make himself well-informed upon every important subject, and was a constant student in the hours in which he was free from the duties of business. He took lessons, and studied and read a great deal. He was always very fond of drawing and of music, and when a young man he played the flute.

In the autumn of 1813 Mr. Potter entered into partnership with Elisha Dyer, under the firm name of Dyer and Potter, and in the spring of 1815 went to England and made purchases and shipments home from there. During Mr. Potter's absence in Europe, Mr. Dyer went to New York, and made sales there of the goods which arrived from Europe, leaving Mr. Russell in charge of the business in Providence. In the same year Mr. Russell was himself sent to New York to attend to the sale of goods arriving for Dyer and Potter, and remained there about a

month. This was probably his first visit to New York. And in the winter and spring of 1816 he again spent three months in New York upon the same business, being then chief clerk to the firm. The copartnership of Dyer and Potter terminated in October, 1816. As Mr. Russell enjoyed the confidence of both partners, much of the settlement of the firm's business was entrusted to him.

Some Providence merchants who, at about this time, were sending a cargo of East Indian cotton goods to the Mediterranean, offered him the position of supercargo and agent for their sale at Leghorn, which was a high compliment to so young a man, but the offer was declined; and soon afterwards Mr. Potter proposed to him to go to Europe and buy goods there, which offer he accepted. He was then twenty years of age. Mr. Potter's written instructions to him refer to the experience which he considered that Mr. Russell possessed, and show that the amount of the purchases to be made was left entirely in Mr. Russell's discretion. He was furnished at first with credits to the extent of over eight thousand pounds, and, later, large remittances and credits were sent out to him. The confidence placed in him by Mr. Potter is still further shown by letters written by the latter from Providence and New York, after Mr. Russell's arrival in England, in which Mr. Potter mentions dull business, low prices of English goods and numerous failures, and expresses the opinion that it might be wise to make no further purchases, but still leaves the subject entirely to Mr. Russell's judgment.

Mr. Russell sailed from Boston for Liverpool in

the ship *Plato,* Captain Smith, March nineteenth, 1817, and arrived at Liverpool on April fourteenth. At Liverpool he presented his letters of introduction, was introduced at the Exchange and the Underwriters' Rooms, and was at once and during all the time of his stay treated with much hospitality and kindness. He soon went to Manchester, where he took lodgings, and bought goods there and at Liverpool, Huddersfield, Halifax, Leeds and Rochdale. The goods which he bought were all sent to Liverpool for shipment to America.

During his voyage and his stay in Europe he kept a journal. Soon after landing he quotes the saying that " letters of introduction are so many tickets for a dinner," and adds: " I wish it were possible to dispense with dining out while I am abroad, but I suppose I must put up with it." Dinners were then " at the fashionable hour of five o'clock," of which he seems to have disapproved, as he did also of the very tight waists, short skirts, and short sleeves which were the fashion of the ladies' dress of the period. The journeys which he made to various places were by stage-coach, and he was much impressed by the speed of the coaches and the rapidity with which the changes of horses were made. He was always in search of information about the country, and an entry in his journal shows that he soon learned one good rule for travellers.

" An old fellow on the coach with me, a manufacturer or dealer I concluded, was very solicitous to learn who I was, where from, etc., etc., but I did not think proper to gratify his curiosity. It is too common with American travellers to let people know who they are; and although I shall never,

I trust, be ashamed to own myself an American, yet to gratify any idle curiosity I do not think it worth while to tell any person I meet with that I am a foreigner. In riding in the coaches, in a full one particularly, and where, if not known, it is generally imagined all are of the same country, the conversation usually is very general and interesting, and a stranger may collect from it much information and learn many particulars of the country, which, the instant they discover he is a foreigner, an American particularly, is withheld."

One day at Manchester he went to a dinner-party at the house of a wealthy merchant,

"and sat down to a most sumptuous repast at six o'clock, indeed to a table that would not have disgraced the King of England. I had been led to understand that this gentleman lived in a style of grandeur unequalled by any of the merchants of the place, and what I witnessed would not combat the assertion. He sports his chariot and four, with two footmen, and lives at an expense of about £5,000 a year, upwards of 22,000 dollars. . . . For a nobleman this is a trifling sum in this country, but for a merchant too extravagant."

All of his spare time was spent in studying and reading. He was much struck by the great distress prevailing among the poor, who seemed to have no possible means of improving their condition. He made an excursion from Manchester to Scotland, going by coach to Edinburgh, stopping on the way at Leeds, York, and Newcastle-on-Tyne, and from Falkirk to Glasgow by canal. At all of these places he was busily engaged in sight-seeing, and also elsewhere in noting what could be seen of places through

which he passed. An entry in his diary at Glasgow reminds us of the barbarity of the English criminal statutes of that period.

"A poor wretch was executed to-day near my lodgings for passing counterfeit money, but I did not witness it. The Government seems to make but little hesitation in these times in putting its convicts to death. Seldom a week passes but more or less are hanged. The very week of my arrival in England nine poor fellows were hanged in Lancashire for different crimes." [1]

At Glasgow, in one of his wanderings on the banks of the Clyde, he noticed "Fort Matilda, a handsome battery of eleven guns, built during the late war with America, 'to keep the Yankees off.'" He visited Paisley, and bought goods there and at Glasgow. On leaving Glasgow he parted with regret from "my kind Scotch friends from whom I have received so much attention"; and returned by coach to Manchester through "the renowned headquarters of Hymen, Gretna Green," Carlisle, Lancaster and Preston. An entry in his journal refers to the calls of the watchmen at night. He passed his last evening in Manchester with a gentleman who had been very kind to him, "and thrice heard the watchman

[1] "From the Restoration to the death of George III—a period of 160 years—no less than 187 capital offences were added to the criminal code. . . . In such a multiplication of offences all principle was ignored; offences wholly different in character and degree were confounded in the indiscriminating penalty of death." (May's "Constitutional History of England," Vol. II, p. 553.) "This bloody code did not reach its full measure of atrocity till towards the close of the reign of George III," *i. e.*, 1820. (Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," Vol. VI, p. 208.)

call ' past twelve o'clock and a starlight morning,' ere I could tear myself from the friendly company of this gentleman." He went from Manchester to Sheffield. On the way " we passed a gibbet, on which hung in chains the remains of a man who was executed two years since for the murder of a woman, ' the wind whistling through his hollow bones.' " He had but little business to do at Sheffield, and went on to Birmingham, and thence to Kidderminster, Stratford-on-Avon, Oxford and London. He lodged at Richard's Coffee House in Fleet Street, and spent about three weeks in London, where he met friends and made acquaintances. He occupied himself in sight-seeing, much of which he did in company with his friends, Messrs. Lawrence and Bigelow, of Boston; saw a case tried in the Court of King's Bench before Lord Ellenborough, and in the House of Commons saw Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning.

Having finished his business, he went from London to Holland, landing at Helvoetsluys, thence going to Briel and Rotterdam, and by the canal to Delft, The Hague, Leyden, Haarlem and Amsterdam. He had letters of introduction at Amsterdam, was introduced on 'Change, and received hospitable attentions from the Messrs. Crommelius, the great Dutch merchants. From Amsterdam he went to Utrecht, from there by diligence to Antwerp, and thence to Ghent. The name of Ghent was very familiar to all Americans at that day, as there had been signed, December twenty-fourth, 1814, the treaty of peace (commonly known as " the treaty of Ghent ") between the United States and Great Britain at the

close of the "War of 1812." Mr. Russell was much interested in seeing the house in which the Commissioners had met; no doubt especially so from the fact that one of the Commissioners who signed the treaty was his cousin, Jonathan Russell.[1] From Ghent he went to Brussels, where he heard of the death of Madame de Staël. He visited the field of Waterloo, where the great battle had taken place two years before, and where many evidences of the battle still remained. From Utrecht to Brussels he travelled in company with some English gentlemen, whom he had met at the former place, and whom he found to be very agreeable companions. With them he left Brussels for France. Soon after crossing the frontier, they met a body of Cossacks, and a few hours later, on reaching Valenciennes, they saw the redcoats of the British garrison, both forces being part of the army of occupation still remaining in France after the final defeat of Napoleon. "What a degrading circumstance, and what must be the feelings of a man to see his country, and that country one which has dictated to millions and tens of millions of people, with her citadels in the hands of foreign troops!" Again at Cambrai they found British troops. At the latter place he parted with

[1] The American Commissioners were John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin and Jonathan Russell. The latter was a son of Mr. Russell's uncle Jonathan Russell, of Providence, and was a distinguished man in public life. He represented the United States as chargé d'affaires at Paris, 1810–1811, and at London, 1811–1812; and as minister at Stockholm, 1814–1818. He was a Member of Congress from Massachusetts, 1821–1825, and died in 1832.

his companions and went on to Paris. On his way he says:

"I find for the first time the fashion, which is said to prevail in France, of touching glasses when they drink wine, and not drinking healths. Our little company very sociably sat and drank to each other in this manner."

The English custom he notes elsewhere, as follows:

"Cheese closes the dinner, and after this the cloth is removed, and wine drinking is the order of the day. Toasts commence from the head of the table or president, and are succeeded by others from the company, as they are called upon by the chair."

He had letters of introduction and met a number of friends in Paris, and spent all of his time there in sight-seeing. He saw the King, Louis XVIII, the Comte d'Artois, the Duc de Berri and the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême. The Paris of that period was still the old Paris, without the great boulevards of the present day. The streets were narrow, without sidewalks. Water ran in the middle of the streets, so that pedestrians kept close to the walls of the houses, when carriages passed, to avoid having water splashed upon them.

He grew homesick, however, by this time, and was very glad to leave Paris for Havre, on his way home; and on the twenty-first of August sailed from Havre for New York in the *Manchester* packet, Captain Burke, and reached New York on October seventh, after a voyage of forty-seven days.

IV

On September thirteenth, 1817, Mr. Russell became of age, and after settling his affairs with Mr. Potter upon his return (the results of his foreign purchases having been very successful) started in business for himself in Providence, with his brother, William Henry Russell, then eighteen years old, as his bookkeeper.

In 1818 Mr. Potter invited him to join him in a partnership, and one was then formed, composed of Charles Potter and Charles H. Russell, under the firm name of Charles Potter and Company, for the wholesale business of importing and selling foreign dry-goods. The firm bought the fireproof building previously occupied by the Roger Williams Bank at No. 12 Cheapside, and carried on their business there, William Henry Russell continuing with them.[1]

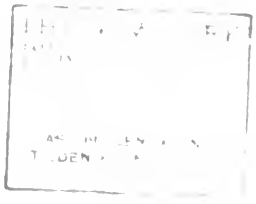
On the thirteenth of April, 1818, at Providence, Mr. Russell was married to Miss Ann Rodman, a daughter of Captain William Rodman of Providence, and a sister of the wife of Mr. Charles Potter. Her mother was Ann Olney, a niece of Colonel Jere-

[1] A writer of reminiscences of a period fifty years earlier, in the "Providence Journal" in 1873, says that at that time "Messrs. Potter & Russell (Charles Potter and Charles H. Russell), importers of European and East Indian dry-goods, occupied the whole of the upper stories of the building, importing rich goods, not only for this but largely for the New York and Boston markets also, and they had then ample room for their extensive business."

MRS. RUSSELL

(Ann Rodman)

1831



miah Olney, of the Revolutionary army. On April twelfth, 1819, their first child, Eliza Rodman Russell, was born at Providence.

In 1819 Mr. Russell was one of the incorporators of the Providence Institution for Savings, and at the time of his death, in 1884, was the last survivor of the original incorporators. The business of Charles Potter and Company was very good; large importations of English and Scotch goods were made; and business was done in New York as well as in Providence. In 1820, the name of the firm was changed to "Potter and Russell." Mr. Russell's interest in the profits of the business was then two-fifths; and after his return from Europe, which he again visited in 1821, it became one-half.

In 1821 Mr. Russell paid his second visit to Europe, going abroad to make purchases of goods for his firm. He left Providence for Hartford in the stage-coach, on his way to New York, at five o'clock in the morning of the twenty-third of January, and arrived at New York at six o'clock in the evening of the twenty-fifth, "after the coldest ride I ever endured, 10° to 20° below zero. The river was frozen from New York across to the Jersey shore." He was delayed by this cause until February fifth, when he sailed for Liverpool in the ship *Hester,* Captain Gillender, and arrived there on March eighth, after a stormy passage of thirty-one days. He remained in Europe, most of the time in England, for over a year, purchasing goods at Manchester, Rochdale, Halifax, Leeds, Birmingham, Glasgow, Paisley and other places, and at Paris, and sending them to America. His residence was chiefly at Manches-

ter, as on his previous visit. Besides giving careful attention to his business, he was constantly studying and sight-seeing. On one of several visits to London, he reached there just before the coronation of King George IV. On the evening of his arrival he saw Queen Caroline, of whom he thus writes in his journal:

"Having understood that the Queen was to attend in the evening, I visited the English Opera House, which was quite crowded, and it was with difficulty that I procured a seat. Her Majesty had just arrived and taken a seat in the orchestra-box next to the stage. My position was for a little time directly opposite, until the crowd was so excessive as to induce me to change it, and I had a fair view of this celebrated person, who has made so conspicuous a figure the past year. I was disappointed in her appearance. She appears short, probably not much over five feet two or three inches tall, and is quite fat; there is a boldness in her countenance and an expression in her large dark eyes which I could not admire; her dress was a blue silk or satin, over which was thrown a large merino shawl, and on her head she wore a bunch of large pink ostrich feathers. During the evening she rose several times and bowed with much dignity to the audience, which greeted Her Majesty with much applause, but occasionally it was mingled with signs of disapprobation from some few in the house."

He found all London in great excitement, in anticipation of the coronation and in preparation for it. He writes about it as follows:

"19th July. The important day has at length arrived. Last night I went to bed at about ten o'clock, and dreamed in anticipation of the coronation scene. At three o'clock

this morning I was called up; already at this very early hour and long before had the crowd been collecting, and the line of carriages going to the scene extended for miles through the streets. I pushed through, and by showing my ticket gained my seat, which afterwards proved to have been well chosen, and one of the best I could have taken without paying a much higher price, or going into the Abbey or Hall, which I could not afford. I went in company with Mr. George Wright, of Birmingham, and Mr. Jones, of Boston. Mr. Hone and Mr. Price, of New York, took seats in the Abbey, for which they paid twenty-five guineas each. It had for several days been currently reported that the Queen was to claim admittance to the coronation as a spectator, a participation in which had been refused her. At seven o'clock a tremendous tumult and cry roused me from a stupor in which I had fallen from being up so early, and I rushed to the gallery in time to see Her Majesty's coach, drawn by six bay horses, drive up to the platform directly opposite and within a few yards of my place. The air resounded with mingled shouts of applause and disapprobation, the troops flew to their places and fixed bayonets, and the cavalry mounted their horses. In a few moments Lord Hood, who had followed in another carriage, handed the Queen out of her coach, accompanied by Lady Hood and Lady Ann Hamilton, and the party proceeded towards an open door, which led to an entrance into the Hall. When within a few yards of this, it was violently shut and fastened in the face of the Queen. Oh, thought I to myself, where is now the dignity of royalty?—for certainly Her Majesty did appear in a most awkward situation, standing on the ground on the arm of Lord Hood and surrounded by the mob, where she remained a few moments, but presently walked, followed by the same crowd, along outside of the platform about a hundred yards to an opening on the platform which crossed to the Abbey, and at the Abbey door admittance was again claimed and refused. She then

walked back again through the multitude, amidst shouts and hisses, to her coach, the top of which was let down, and she was driven back again; and no affray took place, and no blood was spilt as had been foretold. It appeared to me that the spectators showed no disposition to resent the indignity offered to their Queen, that they came there to witness the coronation, and were more disposed to be quiet and enjoy that than to interfere in any broil. Her Majesty was very elegantly dressed in white satin, with ostrich feathers on her head.

"At about ten o'clock, the important procession from the Hall to the Abbey began to move. It would require more room and more time than I can conveniently allow to give here a detailed account of this most gorgeous and splendid pageant, the brilliancy of which exceeded far what imagination could conceive. . . .

"Among those whom I most desired to see, I was gratified with a view of the Duke of Wellington, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Sussex, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke of Clarence, the Duke of York, and His Majesty the King, George the Fourth, both going to and coming from the Abbey, with the crown upon his head, and all the peers with their coronets on. Being directly opposite the door of Westminster Hall, I had likewise an excellent view of the champion dressed in full armor going from the stable to the Hall, and when he returned bearing the gold cup and cover, his fee. In this part of the ceremony he was attended by the Duke of Wellington as High Constable and the Marquis of Anglesea. The former was greeted with much applause by the spectators, which he acknowledged by touching his coronet and by a half inclination of the head, both without dignity."

In October he went to France; and made the journey from Calais to Paris by diligence—the old-fash-

ioned diligence in three compartments, with five horses, the postilion riding one of the two wheel-horses and driving three horses in front of him—through Marquise, Boulogne, Montreuil, Abbeville, Beauvais, etc., leaving Calais at half-past ten in the morning, and reaching Paris at half-past six on the evening of the following day. While in Paris he saw, among other interesting persons, Talma in "Agamemnon," King Louis XVIII, Talleyrand, and the beautiful Duchesse de Berri, the latter at mass in the royal chapel, "in white figured silk and with white bonnet and feathers," and had an interview with the Marquis de La Fayette, who made a special appointment to receive him. He had lodgings in a French family. At that time, there were very few Americans in Europe.

In December he returned to England, and remained there until the following June, excepting short visits to Wales and Ireland. He was so fortunate as to see and hear, at one session of the House of Commons, several of the most celebrated public men of the day, of whom he writes in his journal:

"Wednesday, 5th June. I was much gratified this evening at the House of Commons in seeing and hearing some of the most conspicuous members speak. When I entered, Sir Francis Burdett was on the floor with some proposition relating to Ilchester Gaol. Mr. Brougham and Alderman Wood both spoke on the same subject. Mr. Peel, Secretary of State, introduced a bill continuing in force the Alien Act, and spoke most eloquently in its favor. He was replied to by Sir James McIntosh in a most powerful manner. Mr. Scarlet, Sir Robert Wilson, the Marquis of Londonderry, Sergeant Onslow, Sir John Newport, Lord

Stanley, Lord A. Hamilton and Mr. Denman were also speakers. The latter has a most powerful voice and speaks most eloquently; he was heard with particular attention. In the close of the evening Mr. Hume spoke on some subjects of so little importance, however, as to pass unreported."

While in England, he visited Bath and Cheltenham, which were then great resorts of fashion. On the second of July he sailed for New York in the *Columbia,* Captain Rogers, and reached New York on the eighth of August, after a smooth and pleasant summer voyage. He went from New York to Providence by the steamboat *Fulton.* Two steamboats, the *Connecticut* and the *Fulton,* were then plying between New York and Providence. Steamboats were still somewhat of a novelty, and he gladly availed himself of "this new and unexpected mode of reaching home from New York." After his return, Mr. Russell continued to live in Providence.

A great day was the twenty-third of August, 1824, when the Marquis de La Fayette visited Providence. This was during the memorable tour which he made through the United States, many years after he had left the country at the end of the Revolutionary War, and which was marked throughout by the most enthusiastic demonstrations of affection for him. He was then on his way from Hartford to Boston. Every man, woman, and child turned out to do him honor. Upon his arrival there was a procession to the State House, where he was formally received by the authorities. The chief marshal of the day was Colonel William Blodget, and the assistant marshals, one of whom rode on horseback on either side of La

Fayette's carriage, were Mr. Russell and Mr. George Curtis (father of the late George William Curtis). The Marquis alighted from his carriage at the foot of the avenue leading from North Main Street to the State House. This avenue in those days was bordered on each side by tall Lombardy poplars. Along these rows of poplars were stationed two hundred girls dressed in white, who strewed the path of the Marquis with flowers and waved their white handkerchiefs as he passed. Afterwards there was a great banquet at the Globe Tavern, where Tristam Burgess made a speech, followed by a public reception and a review of the militia. Mr. Russell on this occasion had the pleasure of renewing his acquaintance with La Fayette, whom he had met at Paris in 1821, as already mentioned.

V

In 1825 a branch of the house of Potter and Russell was established in New York, under the name of Potter, Russell and Company, and Mr. Russell went to New York to take charge of it. His brother William Henry Russell went to England as the representative of the firm in Europe. New York then became Mr. Charles H. Russell's residence, and continued to be until his death in 1884.

New York at that time had a population of about one hundred and sixty thousand. The city extended but a short distance north of Canal Street, where there was a stream crossed by a bridge, beyond which was the open country. The private residences were nearly all below Chambers Street, the best of them being in the cross streets west of Broadway, and in lower Broadway and Greenwich Street, and at the Battery. The latter was then the principal park and the fashionable promenade. The business parts of the city were chiefly between Broadway and the East River. Six years later, in 1831, Mr. Russell was one of a committee of forty-six gentlemen who had charge of the arrangements for a public dinner which was given to Daniel Webster. Mr. Russell was probably the youngest member of the committee, and the names generally are those of very well-known men of that day. It is interesting, in reading the names of the members of the committee, to which their addresses are added, to note the parts of

the city in which they lived. Their residences were mostly in Bowling Green, Park Place, Varick, Chambers, Greenwich, Warren, Murray, Barclay, Pearl, Pine and Whitehall Streets, and lower Broadway. There were no railways nor telegraph in those days. Steamboats were in use, as already mentioned, but it was not until 1838 that the voyage across the Atlantic was made by steam only.

The firm of Potter and Russell was dissolved at the end of the year 1826. Mr. Potter continued in business in Providence; and Mr. Russell and his brother William Henry Russell formed a new partnership under the firm name of " Charles H. Russell and Company." By their partnership agreement it was provided that the brothers should become " copartners together in trade as merchants, under the firm name and style of Charles H. Russell and Company, for the purpose of importing British and other goods and for commercial business generally, as may mutually be deemed advisable," and that William Henry Russell should reside in England as the representative of the firm in Europe. This partnership continued until Mr. Charles H. Russell retired from business in 1845. Mr. Charles Gorton and Mr. George W. Hodges also were, for a time, prior to 1840, partners in this house and in a branch house at Manchester, in England, which was known as " William H. Russell and Company." Mr. William H. Russell lived abroad during a considerable portion of the period of the existence of the firm. Mr. Benjamin F. Marsh became a partner in 1844.

The business of the house was in the importation and sale of foreign dry-goods and other merchandise,

on its own account and on commission, and also in the like purchase and sale of domestic manufactures. Its first place of business was at No. 173 Pearl Street. In 1826 it removed to No. 165 Pearl Street; in 1835 to No. 33 Pine Street; and in 1840 to No. 35 Nassau Street.

Mr. Russell, upon making New York his residence, lived at first at No. 85 White Street. In 1826 he removed to No. 68 Franklin Street, and in 1833 to No. 56 Franklin Street. In 1833 he purchased land on the northeast corner of Broadway and Great Jones Street, on which he built himself a dwelling-house, which was completed in 1835, and he first occupied it with his family in the autumn of that year. At the time this house (No. 2 Great Jones Street) was built, it was the furthest "uptown" of the private residences of New York, and to the south of it, on Broadway, were several vacant blocks of land. The house was a large and comfortable one, with a garden and a stable. In this garden later was a magnolia tree, which grew to a considerable size and height, and became famous for its beauty, in the spring, when covered with flowers. This house continued to be Mr. Russell's city home until 1862, when he removed to No. 417 Fifth Avenue, where he resided until his death in 1884.

Mr. Russell's brother, William Henry Russell, was married in 1823 to Miss Mary Alice Crapo, of Providence, who died in 1827, leaving one child, Mary Caroline Russell, afterwards Mrs. Theodosius A. Fowler. William Henry Russell was again married, in 1836, to Miss Anna Kane, and built

a house on Broadway, adjoining his brother's, and first occupied it in that year.[1]

On the tenth of March, 1836, Mr. Russell's daughter, Fanny Geraldine Russell, was born. On September fifteenth, 1837, his brother's daughter, Helen Nicholson Russell, afterwards Madame Maxime Outrey, was born.

Mr. Russell, while giving the closest attention to his business, always took a great interest in the questions of the day and a very active part in connection with many of them. In 1831 he was one of the delegates from New York to the "Free Trade Convention" at Philadelphia, the object of which was to effect a reduction of the duties levied upon imports by the then existing tariff. The earlier tariffs had been established for the purpose of raising revenue for the payment of the debt and the expenses of the government. "Revenue the object, protection the incident, had been the rule in the earlier tariffs."[2]

[1] "1836, December 30. I went this evening to a party at Mrs. Charles H. Russell's, given in honor of the bride, Mrs. William H. Russell. The splendid apartments of this fine house are well adapted to an evening party, and everything was very handsome on this occasion. The house is lighted with gas, and the quantity consumed being greater than common it gave out suddenly in the midst of a cotillon. This accident occasioned great merriment to the company, and some embarrassment to the host and hostess, but a fresh supply of gas was obtained, and in a short time the fair dancers were again 'tripping it on the light fantastic toe.' Gas is a handsome light, in a large room like Mr. Russell's, on an occasion of this kind, but liable (I should think) at all times to give the company the slip, and illy calculated for the ordinary uses of a family." (From "The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828–1851," edited by Bayard Tuckerman, New York, 1889, Vol. I, p. 239.)

[2] Benton, "Thirty Years' View," Vol. I, p. 32.

The tariff act of 1816 introduced and the acts of 1824 and 1828 continued and carried to greater lengths the principle of protection. The act of 1828 created to a great extent a prohibitory tariff, and was considered by its opponents so unjust and so unequal in its effect upon different sections of the country that it was commonly known among them as the " tariff of abominations."

Among the delegates from New York to the Free Trade Convention were Albert Gallatin, Jonathan Goodhue, James G. King, John A. Stevens, George Griswold, Jacob Lorillard and James Boorman. There was a large attendance from all parts of the Union; and the work of the convention resulted in an address to the people of the United States and a memorial to Congress, prepared by a committee of which Mr. Gallatin was chairman. This memorial prayed for a gradual reduction of import duties, so as finally to raise only such amount of revenue as should be necessary for the ordinary needs of the government, and that such duties as should be levied should be at an uniform rate of not over twenty-five per cent. These propositions were submitted as a general principle. The memorialists further stated that " whilst admitting that duties, not exceeding in the aggregate the amount thus required, may be arranged as the necessary exceptions to the general rule shall require, they contend that any considerable variation from the average rate for the purpose of favoring special branches is injurious to American industry; attended with certain national loss; unequal and oppressive in its oper-

ation, both with regard to the several classes of society and to the several sections of the country."

Mr. Russell took great interest in all the proceedings of the Free Trade Convention. He prepared and presented to Mr. Gallatin, the chairman of the committee, a statement showing the effect of the tariff on numerous articles of import. Mr. Gallatin, afterwards, in referring to the work of the Free Trade Convention, spoke in the highest terms of Mr. Russell's knowledge and intelligence and of his contribution to the work of the Convention.

The tariff act of 1832 still further increased the duties on imports, and was a distinctly protective measure. In 1833, however, the "Compromise Tariff Act" was passed, which provided for the gradual reduction of duties, during a period of nine years, at the end of which period there should be an uniform rate of twenty per cent. on all articles; and this act continued in force until the passage of the tariff act of 1842, which again was a high protective measure. The various political questions which arose in consequence of all this tariff legislation, including the declaration at the South of the doctrines of nullification and secession, make this period one of the most interesting in American history. The principles for which the memorialists of the Free Trade Convention of 1831 contended were finally adopted in considerable measure in the tariff act of 1846. Although by this act a high rate of duty was still maintained upon certain articles, yet it effected a considerable reduction in duties. Cottons were made subject to twenty-five per cent. duty; iron and

metals in general, wool and woolens, manufactures of metals, leather, paper, glass and wood, to thirty per cent. In 1857 a further reduction in duties was made by an act passed in that year, under which the important articles above mentioned were in general made subject to twenty-four per cent. duty. This act also placed upon the free list many raw materials used in manufacture, and continued in force until the necessities of the government, after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, required a change. The years from 1846 to 1861 were a period of remarkable development of the commerce and manufactures of the country.

The views of the memorial of 1831 are those which Mr. Russell held to the end of his life. He believed that no duties ever should exceed thirty per cent., and in protection only so far as it might be given incidentally in the raising of revenue for the needs of the government. Of the system of a protective tariff as it existed during the last years of his life he disapproved absolutely. On all such questions he was ever ready to meet discussion, with arguments derived from close observation and profound study and from practical experience extending over a long and active life.

In 1832 began the fierce political contest arising from the veto by Andrew Jackson, then President of the United States, of the bill to renew the charter of the Bank of the United States, and continued by the President's subsequent action, in 1833, in the removal of the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Duane, the appointment of Roger B. Taney as his successor, and the removal of the government de-

posits from the Bank. The action of the President was regarded by a large number of the people of the country as a serious encroachment by the executive branch of the government upon the powers of Congress and of the courts. The financial disorder and commercial distress caused by the removal of the deposits; the public dissatisfaction arising from the wholesale removal of public employees, which was made by the President at this time, being the first general application in our history of the " spoils doctrine "; and other acts of the President, which were considered to be high-handed and arbitrary, and as opposed to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, all combined to arouse and maintain the most intense political excitement. It is stated by writers of the history of that period that it would be difficult to believe how intense and bitter the feeling was, had we not the testimony of those who took part in the events.

Mr. Russell was one of a committee of thirteen citizens of New York, appointed at a public meeting, who visited Washington in January, 1834, and presented in the House of Representatives a memorial to Congress, protesting against the removal of the deposits, after which they made a formal call upon the President, General Jackson. The interview was made especially interesting by the President's violent denunciation of Mr. Biddle, the president of the Bank of the United States.

The political events above referred to were the cause of the organization in 1834 of the Whig party (called by Mr. Curtis, in his life of Daniel Webster, a " spontaneous popular movement "), which after-

wards became powerful, and of which Henry Clay and Mr. Webster were the chief leaders. Mr. Russell joined the Whig party in its beginning. He was one of the delegates to the Whig general committee of the city of New York, and chairman of the finance committee. He was one of the speakers at a Whig meeting held at the Exchange in New York on April seventh, 1834, and one of eleven vice-presidents of a meeting of Whig merchants held at the Exchange on the twenty-seventh of October of that year.

A great Whig meeting was held at Masonic Hall, in New York, on the twenty-ninth of the same month, to ratify the nominations of the party for Congress, the State legislature and county offices. Long accounts of this meeting are given in the newspapers of the day, and it was estimated that not less than twelve thousand persons were present in the hall and at the overflow meetings held in the street in front of the building. Mr. Russell presided and addressed the meeting. The following extract is from the account given in the "New York American" extra of the thirtieth of October:

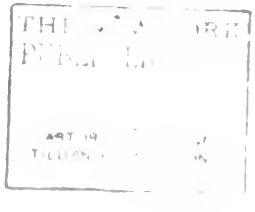
"The meeting in the Hall being called to order, it was proposed that Charles H. Russell take the chair. The annunciation of that name produced shouts of applause and long-continued cheers, which marked in the clearest and most gratifying manner the feelings of the Whigs toward that gentleman, and their full and just appreciation of the magnanimity which, on a recent occasion, had distinguished his conduct."

The nominees for Congress were Gulian C. Verplanck, Ogden Hoffman, James G. King and Dud-

MRS. RUSSELL

(Caroline Howland)

1853



ley Selden; and Mr. Russell's "magnanimity" is understood to have been shown in his declining the nomination for Congress, which had been offered to him, in favor of one of those gentlemen whom he considered to have certain claims to it.[1]

At one time Mr. Russell appears to have been disposed to go into active political life, but later he

[1] The Hone Club was a celebrated dining club, named after Philip Hone, and was organized in 1838. Its members were all Whigs. The original members, besides Mr. Hone, were Edward R. Biddle, Richard M. Blatchford, Roswell L. Colt, John Crumby, Simeon Draper, Moses H. Grinnell, J. Prescott Hall, Charles H. Russell, John Ward and William G. Ward. Daniel Webster and William H. Seward were honorary members. The club dined every Monday, from October to April, at the houses of the members in succession, and the host on each occasion had the privilege of inviting a limited number of others as guests. The dinners of the club were noted for their merriment and wit, and it was always considered a great compliment to be invited to be a guest. Mr. Philip Hone died in 1851. Changes in the membership occurred from time to time, and among the later members were Robert S. Hone, John Jacob Astor, Jr., Hamilton Fish, Alexander Hamilton, Jr., Henry G. Stebbins, Isaac Bell, Alexander Duncan and William M. Evarts. The time of meeting was changed to every other Monday, and the number of members was increased from ten to fourteen. One of the rules was: "Dinner shall be on the table at six o'clock punctually. A member who is five minutes late shall forfeit a basket of champagne, and if the host is five minutes late with his dinner he shall forfeit a basket of champagne." All forfeits went to the member who was to give the next dinner. In "The Diary of Philip Hone" is the following entry, in 1839: "January 7. The club dined at Mr. Russell's. Messrs. Duer and Colt absent. We had, among the supernumeraries, Mr. Webster, who is here on his way to Washington. He was in exuberant spirits, and more agreeable than I have ever seen him on any former occasion. We sat until eleven o'clock, and broke up after a grand chorus of 'Auld Lang Syne.'"

The club ceased to meet after 1860.

was unwilling to do so, and although tendered nominations for political positions always declined them. It is not possible that he approved of all the proceedings of the Whig party. It may be that such a reason influenced him to decline political office during the existence of that party; and he was too just and fair in his judgments and too broad-minded ever to be a thorough-going partisan. The tariff act of 1842 was a Whig party measure; and its provisions certainly were contrary to what are known to have been his convictions and his publicly expressed opinions. He was on terms of friendship and had frequent conferences with Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, in relation to the tariff act of 1846, of which Mr. Walker was the framer, and which was a Democratic party measure. By many of the most influential and intelligent citizens of New York the desire was at times expressed that he should hold the office of Secretary of the Treasury. But whatever fancy for office he at one time may have had he certainly very decidedly abandoned; and later in life he was confirmed in this position. In a letter to one of his sons, written in April, 1878, he referred with approbation to the declaration of Mr. Webster, quoted in Peter Harvey's "Reminiscences," that if he were to live his life over again he would under no circumstances and from no considerations allow himself to enter public life; and in another letter, in October, 1879, he wrote: "The more I witness the subserviency of talented men and the want of honest principles in political life, the better I feel that I did not cast my lot in that direction"; and he expressed contempt for a certain

statesman of the day, of whom he said that "'he knew the right and yet the wrong pursued.'"

But although Mr. Russell held those views as to his own participation in active political life (which perhaps there is reason to regret), yet he never ceased the serious study of all questions affecting the interests and the welfare of the country, nor the expression of his views, nor the exercise of his influence, which was great. He was always a recognized authority upon questions of finance, currency and tariff; and his opinions and advice were frequently sought by Secretaries of the Treasury and by leading men of all parties, both in and out of Congress. He was on terms of personal friendship, and in some instances of intimacy, with many leading public men; such friendships extending over a period of fifty years.

Far more important, among the political questions of the years from 1830 to 1860, than any other was the subject of the extension of slavery to the Territories of the United States. The annexation of Texas and the results of the Mexican War had brought about in the slave States a sense of power and a determination to secure the extension of slavery to the new Territories. The Democratic party was controlled by the statesmen of the South, and was united and aggressive. The leaders of the Whigs seem not to have realized, until too late, the danger of the situation, and were always fearful of conflict and ready with compromise. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the enactment of the Compromise of 1850 aroused the people of the free States to a sense of the danger. The

lawfulness of the existence of slavery in the slave States was not questioned nor disputed by any considerable or important body of voters anywhere; but the majority of the people of most of the free States were determined that there should be no extension of slavery to the Territories nor to the States which, in the course of time, would be formed out of them. This strong purpose led to the organization of the Republican party, which condemned the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and declared it to be the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories. The day of the Whig party was over; and from 1854 until the outbreak of the Civil War, the great contest upon the question of the extension of slavery was waged between the Democratic party, representing the pro-slavery interests of the Southern States, and the Republican party.

In all this controversy Mr. Russell never hesitated as to his course. He was earnestly opposed to any extension of slavery, and became a member of the Republican party soon after its formation. He supported General Frémont, the first candidate of the Republican party for the Presidency, in the campaign of 1856, and continued to be a member of that party during the rest of his life, although in many instances disapproving of its course in relation to questions which arose after the Civil War. General Frémont was defeated; but in 1860 the second candidate of the Republican party, Abraham Lincoln, was elected to the Presidency.

VI

THE "Great Fire" in New York occurred on the night of December fifteenth, 1835. A few years before his death, Mr. Russell gave an account of his experiences on that occasion, which he afterwards dictated to one of his daughters, at her request; and they are best told in his own words:

"On the evening of December fifteenth occurred the disastrous fire in the lower part of the city, below Wall Street, which destroyed upwards of six hundred buildings—mostly stores. On that eventful night, which was a bitterly cold one, after tea we had just seated ourselves around the fire and I had taken a book to read, which, I think, was one of Scott's novels, when Mr. George T. Adee arrived and informed us that a fire had broken out in Hanover Square, but that neither his store nor mine was in immediate danger, but he had come up to tell us. I ordered my carriage at once, and when we reached Pine Street, where my store was situated, we found that the fire had enlarged its scope very greatly, and had swept down towards South Street; and before it was eventually checked most of the stores and warehouses, with their valuable and costly contents, between South Street and William Street, were enveloped in flames, including vast piles of goods which had been taken from the stores and piled up in Hanover Square, which, instead of being saved, as hoped for, were all ignited and in a blaze, forming a great bonfire. Added to this was the destruction of all the stores on the west of Hanover Square, to William Street and Garden Street, including the Garden Street Dutch

Church, the noble marble Exchange, as well as the warehouse of Mr. Adee, who, when he came to announce the fire to me, thought it would not reach his place. It was finally stayed in its progress westward and northward by blowing up several buildings, before it reached Broad Street. During the height of the flames I was upon the roof of my Pine Street warehouse, watching with intense interest the progress of the fire, knowing that, unless it was stopped on the south of Wall Street, the buildings to the north, including the banks, were doomed, and with them my own warehouse; and where the fire could be stopped northward we could not tell. The wind was blowing a gale, the thermometer below zero, and water in the engines and hose freezing. The scene in the morning was heartrending—the still half-burning and smoking ruins, the sad faces, the gloom which pervaded the whole city, and the immensity of the loss, for the estimate was more than $20,000,000."

Following the fire there was great distress in the commercial community; and the insurance companies were ruined. Great liberality and public spirit, however, were shown, and creditors generally gave every possible indulgence to their debtors. A result of this disaster was that commercial houses and the business community in general were much less prepared than otherwise they would have been for the business troubles which occurred in 1837, or, as they are commonly called, "the panic of 1837." This panic was the result of various causes, the chief among them being the expiration of the charter of the Bank of the United States and very extensive and wild speculation, chiefly in stocks and Western lands, which had been encouraged and aided by State banks in many parts of the country. In addition,

there had been a great excess of imports over exports and a consequent export of specie. At the height of all the inflation and expansion, the New York banks found themselves obliged to suspend specie payments, May tenth, 1837; and great pressure in the money-market and distress throughout the commercial community ensued. Business houses in New York failed by the score. Relatively to the business of the country, this year 1837 probably was the period of the severest commercial disaster which ever has been known in the United States. The house of Charles H. Russell and Company lost in this year the earnings of the two preceding ones, but remained solvent and continued its business without interruption. In the next year, the business of the house greatly increased; and in that and the following years its operations were very extensive and successful, and continued to be so until the dissolution of the partnership upon Mr. Russell's retirement from business in 1845. The credit of the house was of the highest; and the statement has often been made by those who were familiar with the commercial affairs of that period that both at home and abroad its name was the synonym of the highest honor and integrity.

As already mentioned, the New York banks suspended specie payments on the tenth of May, 1837, and a general suspension by the banks throughout the country followed. In the following autumn a convention was held in New York, composed of delegates from the banks of most of the States, called by the officers of the New York banks for the purpose of agreeing, if possible, upon a time

for a general resumption of specie payments. The New York banks were anxious and determined to bring about resumption at an early day; and this purpose appears to have received the approval of the business community of the city. At a meeting held at the Merchants' Exchange in March, 1838, a resolution drawn by Mr. Russell, approving the purpose of the banks to resume, was adopted. Great delay occurred in the proceedings of the convention, caused chiefly by the opposition of the Philadelphia banks, but finally, in April, 1838, the convention fixed the first of January, 1839, as the date of resumption. The New York banks, however, did not wait until then, but resumed independently on the tenth of May, 1838. Although this action was taken by them alone, resumption of specie payments by the banks throughout the country followed within a few months.

At this time the business of banking in the State of New York was a monopoly in the hands of a few institutions. Bank charters could be obtained only by special legislation, which it was very difficult to procure. In other States the business of banking was more or less demoralized, and in some of them an enormous quantity of bank-notes of little or no value had been issued; and the notes of most of the State banks throughout the country either were not received at all outside of the States where they were issued or else only at a considerable discount.

On the eighteenth of April, 1838, two days after the adjournment of the bankers' convention, the "General Banking Act" was passed by the legislature of the State of New York. This act au-

thorized the formation of associations "to establish offices of discount, deposit and circulation," in accordance with the provisions of the act. In other words, it provided for "free banking," and effectually abolished the banking monopoly in the State. Under this act the "Bank of Commerce in New York," of which Mr. Russell was one of the original directors, was organized to carry on the business of banking in the city of New York. The articles of association bear date of January first, 1839, and provide, among other things, for a capital stock of five millions of dollars, with authority to the board of directors to increase the capital stock until it should amount to twenty millions of dollars. Undoubtedly it was contemplated that the United States government might use this bank as its fiscal agent in government business, or in some other manner might become interested in it, for it was further provided that the directors, in their discretion, might permit additional subscriptions to be made to the capital stock by or on behalf of the United States of America, as well as by or on behalf of any of the separate States, subject to such conditions as the directors might deem expedient. The additional amount which might thus be subscribed was limited to thirty millions of dollars, making a possible aggregate capital of fifty millions. Provision was also made, in case of any holding of shares by the United States, for inspection of the condition and affairs of the association by the proper officers of the government.

The first directors of the bank, whose names appear as such in the articles of association, were: James Boorman, James Brown, Isaac Carow, James

Donaldson, Archibald Gracie, James Kent (the Chancellor), Robert B. Minturn, Russell H. Nevins, Pelatiah Perit, John Rathbone, Jr., Robert Ray, Samuel B. Ruggles, Charles H. Russell, John Austin Stevens, Jonathan Sturges, Peter Gerard Stuyvesant, Samuel Ward and Stephen Whitney.

The establishment of the Bank of Commerce was an event of far more than local importance. Its purpose was to establish at the financial centre of the country a strong bank with large capital, under the direction of influential and respected merchants, which would attract large deposits and by its strength and conservative management serve as a powerful element of usefulness and steadiness in financial affairs. From the beginning the business of the bank was very successful. It immediately took and afterwards maintained a position of strength and influence. The first president was Samuel Ward, and the first cashier George Curtis. On the death of Mr. Ward in November, 1839, Mr. John A. Stevens was chosen president. Mr. John A. Stevens, son of the latter, in his life of Albert Gallatin (in the "American Statesmen" series) writes as follows in reference to the establishment of the Bank of Commerce (p. 286):

"In 1838, on the foundation of the Bank of Commerce under the free banking law of the State of New York, the presidency of it was first tendered to Mr. Gallatin. The directors of this bank were among the most distinguished financiers of the city, and its object was to provide a conservative institution with sufficient power and capital to act

as a regulator upon the New York banks. Profit to the stockholders was secondary to the reserve power for general advantage."

The expectation of a connection of the government with the Bank of Commerce, which appears to have been entertained at the time of the organization of the bank, was no doubt fully justified by existing circumstances. The Bank of the United States had shortly before ceased to be the fiscal agent of the government, and it was generally expected that there would be a re-establishment of some fiscal agency for government purposes. The expectation that such an office would be filled by the Bank of Commerce was justified by its position and strength. At times it made large loans to the government. By an arrangement with the Secretary of the Treasury the bank became for a time the sole depository of government money in the city of New York, and the revenues received by the collector of customs were deposited with it. Other banks, however, subsequently obtained a share of such deposits; and soon afterwards the change in public sentiment as to the necessity of any bank to perform fiscal services for the government, and the establishment of sub-treasuries of the United States at New York and elsewhere, closed any especial official connection between the bank and the government. In other respects, however, the opportunities of usefulness and influence on the part of the bank were so extensive and its business so prosperous that in 1856 its capital stock was increased to $10,000,000.

Mr. Russell, at all times, from the beginning of

his connection with the Bank of Commerce, took an active interest in it. His spirit and influence were always powerful in it, and his counsel and judgment there, as elsewhere, sought and relied upon.[1]

[1] Reference to the later history of the Bank of Commerce and to Mr. Russell's presidency (1866–1868) will be found at pp. 97 *et seq.*

VII

In the winter of 1842, Mr. Russell made a journey through the Southern States. In a letter written during this journey he gives the following account of an auction sale of slaves:

"The day before I left Mobile I witnessed a negro sale by auction; it was to me a painful sight, but people familiarized to this sight appear to regard it with no more feeling than we do the sale of horses at Tattersall's. The first slave set up by the sheriff was a black fellow, who was represented as 'a first-rate hand, a good rough carpenter, and warranted sound,'—sold for $590 or $600 cash. The second, 'one leg shorter than the other, but warranted sound.' The third, a stout full-sized negro, apparently very strong. While the auctioneer was calling the bid of $575, he exclaimed: 'If nobody give more I give dat price myself,' and appeared rather indignant that he was likely to sell so low; and I understood that the slaves take a pride in being sold at a high price. This fellow was finally sold at $700. The next, a boy ten years old, $300. The big tears rolled down his cheeks while he was being sold, notwithstanding the sheriff's caution to him not to cry. The next and last I noticed, for I waited no longer, was a fine-looking, well-dressed, young mulatto girl, with a child three years old, 'good at sewing and can make shirts.' She appeared to show much anxiety about her fate, and when struck off manifested disappointment and began crying. It appeared that she was bought by a slave-seller, or negro-dealer, as termed here, one of a class of people held in very low estimation. I heard her say, in most sorrowful

accents: ' I should be satisfied if I was sold, but I do not like to be sold to be sold again.' With her child she brought $900. Since I arrived here I have walked through what is called the negro quarters, where these people are exhibited for sale. It is indeed the negro slave-market. Many of them are well dressed and made clean, and show to the best advantage."

Early in the summer of 1842 occurred the insurrection in Rhode Island known as the " Dorr War." This had its origin in a popular movement to revise the provisions of the State constitution in relation to suffrage and representation. The suffrage at that time was limited to the holders of freehold estates of a certain value and their eldest sons; and representation was by towns, based upon the population and relative importance of a much earlier period. The popular movement was for universal suffrage and equal representation. In 1841 a popular convention assembled and adopted a new State constitution, which, it was claimed, was subsequently ratified by the votes of a majority of the adult male voters of the State. In April, 1842, an election under this so-called constitution was held, and Thomas W. Dorr was chosen governor and attempted to exercise the authority of that office. However sufficient grounds there were for a change in the State constitution, and important changes subsequently were made, the proceedings of Dorr and his party were entirely illegal and caused great confusion and disorder.

Dorr left the State, but soon returned with a band of several hundred followers, in open insurrection

against the authorities, and with the avowed purpose of seizing the State government. The militia and volunteers to the number of three thousand men immediately assembled at Providence. Martial law was proclaimed; appeal was made to the President for aid; and great excitement prevailed throughout the State. Dorr intrenched himself at Acote's Hill, at Chepachet, about ten miles from Providence. The troops from Providence marched out to attack his stronghold, but, on reaching there, found that Dorr had fled, leaving but a handful of his followers; and that was the end of the insurrection. But it aroused great excitement and interest throughout the State and the country at the time. The danger of a serious conflict was believed to be very great, and it was averted only by the energy and determination of the "friends of law and order" and the alacrity with which the militia and volunteers assembled to support the constituted authorities.

Upon the news of Dorr's invasion Mr. Russell immediately went to Providence, and offered his services for the defence of his native State. Major-General McNeill, the commander of the troops, appointed him an aide-de-camp, and he served on the staff in that capacity.

Mrs. Russell died in New York on the eighteenth of August, 1842. Eliza Rodman Russell, the eldest daughter, was married to Robert S. Hone in November of the same year; and she and her husband, and Mr. Russell's younger daughters, Anna (who died in 1845) and Fanny then formed his family at No. 2 Great Jones Street.

In the spring of 1843 Mr. Russell again visited

Europe, spending nearly a year in travel. He made the voyage to Europe in the *Great Western* steamship, which five years before had made the memorable voyage across the ocean from Bristol, in England, to New York, arriving at New York a few hours later than the steamer *Sirius,* from Cork, both vessels having been upon the ocean at the same time and being the first vessels to make the passage by means of steam alone.[1]

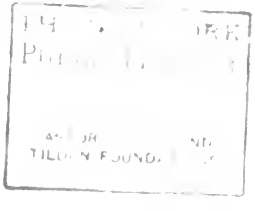
He first passed some time in Scotland and England. While in London he took much interest, as in previous visits, in the debates in Parliament; and among the noted men whom he then heard take part in them were the Duke of Wellington, Lord Brougham, Lord Aberdeen and Lord Lyndhurst in the House of Lords, and Mr. Hume, Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons. After leaving England he travelled in Germany, Switzerland and Italy. There were very few railways on the Continent at that time, and travelling nearly everywhere was by diligence or by carriage. The northern portions of Italy were then under Austrian rule. The numerous custom-houses and the constant examination of passports put travellers to great inconvenience. Travelling in many parts of Italy was dangerous, and a military escort was sometimes needed. At Naples he was presented at the court of Ferdinand II, King of the Two Sicilies. From Rome he went to Paris, where he was presented at the court of King Louis Philippe, and

[1] The *Sirius* left Cork on the fourth of April, 1838, the *Great Western* followed from Bristol on the eighth, and both vessels reached New York on the twenty-third.

MRS. RUSSELL

(Caroline Howland)

1860



thence again to England. He met many friends during this year in Europe, and received much courtesy and attention, especially from the American ministers. Mr. Ledyard was then chargé d'affaires at Paris; Edward Everett minister at London; Mr. Boulware, of Virginia, at Naples; and Mr. Russell's lifelong friend, Henry Wheaton, the author of the "History of the Law of Nations," at Berlin.[1]

On the first of January, 1845, the firm of Charles H. Russell and Company was dissolved by mutual consent, and Mr. Russell then retired permanently from business. His brother, William Henry Russell, and Benjamin F. Marsh continued in business under the firm name of "Russell and Marsh." Mr. Russell was then forty-eight years of age. He had acquired sufficient means, and desired to be relieved from the restraint and cares of commercial life.

Notwithstanding his retirement from business, Mr. Russell continued to take an active part in many undertakings of public interest. He was one of the early directors of the Boston and Providence Railroad Company, whose road was one of the first railways built in New England; and in the Rhode Island act of incorporation of that company in 1834 his name appears as one of the incorporators. The chief purpose of the building of this railway was to make it part of a through line between Boston and New York. He was also for nine years one of the directors, and for a time the president, of the Boston and New York Transportation Company, which maintained a line of steamboats between New York and

[1] Mr. Russell presided at a dinner given to Mr. Wheaton, at the Astor House in New York, in June, 1848.

Providence in connection with the Boston and Providence railway. Somewhat earlier, he had become a director of the Globe Insurance Company of New York, among the directors of which were such well-known men of the day as Nathaniel Prime, John Hone, Peter Remsen, Garrit Storm, Jonathan Goodhue, John Jacob Astor, Isaac Carow and Samuel S. Howland. There was still in those days a good deal of prejudice on the part of old New Yorkers against the "Yankees" from New England, who were establishing themselves in New York; and it was a compliment to the young merchant to be chosen by such men to be their associate. He became a member of the Chamber of Commerce of New York in 1827.[1] In 1839 he became a director of the Bank of Commerce, as already mentioned, and in 1842, upon its organization, a trustee of the Atlantic Mutual Insurance Company, both of which offices he held until his death. Later, at various times, he was a director of the New York Central Railroad Company, the Hudson River Railroad Company, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, the Republic Fire Insurance Company and other corporations; and a member or trustee of various historical, literary and charitable societies, among them being the New York His-

[1] In the annual report of the Chamber of Commerce for 1883–1884 is published an address delivered before that body, at its meeting on February seventh, 1884, upon "The death of Mr. Charles H. Russell." At that meeting it was also "Resolved, That this Chamber pauses in its deliberations to express its sense of the esteem in which they held their late associate, Charles H. Russell, of their appreciation of his long and spotless mercantile career, and of their gratitude for his various public services."

torical Society, the Society of the New York Hospital, the American Art Union, the Redwood Library at Newport, the Newport Hospital, the Rhode Island Historical Society, etc. He was one of the original board of Commissioners of the New York Central Park, from 1857 to 1870; a member of the Union Defence Committee of 1861; one of the commissioners to select a site and adopt plans for a post-office in the city of New York, in 1866; and was constantly requested to serve upon committees in matters of public interest and importance. In regard to the site for the post-office, it was the opinion of Mr. Russell alone among the commissioners that, while a sufficiently large branch post-office should be maintained at or near the site which was chosen by the commission and which is now occupied by the post-office, yet that the principal office should be much further up-town; and the site which he preferred and advised was the north side of Union Square.

On October twenty-ninth, 1850, Mr. Russell was married to Miss Caroline Howland, a daughter of Samuel S. Howland, of the famous house of "Howland and Aspinwall" (previously "G. G. and S. S. Howland"), and a descendant of John Howland, who came to America in the *Mayflower* in 1620 and was one of the founders and leading men of the Plymouth Colony. Mr. and Mrs. Russell went to Europe after their marriage and passed a year there in travel. In 1860 he visited the Isthmus of Panama.

VIII

Mr. Russell was one of the Commissioners of the Central Park in the city of New York, from the organization of the board of Commissioners in 1857 until its dissolution in 1870. For a considerable period before the year 1851 the need of a large public park in the city of New York had been much felt, and the subject had become one of general public interest and discussion. The first practical step in the matter appears to have been taken by Mayor Kingsland, who, on the fifth of April, 1851, sent a communication to the Common Council requesting action by it. The Common Council passed a resolution approving of the establishment of a public park, and recommending that a tract of land situated on the East River, extending from Sixty-fourth to Seventy-fifth Streets, and containing about one hundred and fifty-three acres, including the land known as "Jones' Wood," should be taken for the purpose. Application was made to the legislature, and an act was passed on July eleventh, 1851, authorizing the taking of the land referred to. The passage of this act caused further general discussion of the subject, and it was subsequently decided that the land selected was not the best which could be had for the purpose; and on July twenty-first, 1853, another act of the legislature was passed, establishing as a public park all that portion of what is now known

as " Central Park " (so called from its central situation upon Manhattan Island, between the two rivers, and between the four great thoroughfares, viz.: Third and Fourth Avenues on the east, and Broadway and Eighth Avenue on the west) which lies south of One Hundred and Sixth Street. That portion of the park which extends from One Hundred and Sixth Street to One Hundred and Tenth Street was added in 1863. The " Jones' Wood Act " was subsequently repealed. The formal proceedings for the taking of the land for the " Central Park " were completed in February, 1856. An ordinance of the Common Council placed the care of the park lands temporarily in the hands of the Mayor and the Street Commissioner, and some preliminary surveys were undertaken, but little practical progress was made until the following year, when, by an act of the legislature, passed April seventeenth, 1857, the Central Park was placed " under the exclusive control and management of a Board of Commissioners " consisting of eleven persons, to be known as " The Commissioners of the Central Park." The members of the first board, who were named in the act, were Robert J. Dillon, James E. Cooley, Charles H. Russell, John F. Butterworth, John A. C. Gray, Waldo Hutchins, Thomas C. Fields, Andrew H. Green, Charles W. Elliott, William K. Strong and James Hogg. The act provided that they should hold office for five years, and should fill vacancies occurring in their number; conferred upon them full and exclusive power to lay out and regulate the park and to govern and manage it; and provided for the raising of the funds necessary for the work.

The board was required to make an annual report to the Common Council, but was a State organization and not under the control of the city government.

The first meeting of the board was held on the thirtieth of April, 1857, and the Commissioners immediately undertook the great task before them. A public competition for plans for the laying out of the park was opened, and prizes were offered for those of the highest merit. The plan finally adopted, about one year after the organization of the board, was that of Messrs. Olmsted and Vaux; and thereupon the work of laying out the park was prosecuted with great vigor. It is difficult for any one to realize to-day that this park, now so beautiful, was in most of its area a very unsightly, rocky and barren tract. The irregularities of the ground, and the hills, ravines and water-courses included within this region, while causing many difficulties, yet also gave great opportunities for the improvement of natural beauties. Large forces of men were put to work; and at one time in the early history of the park as many as three thousand five hundred men were employed there. Such a work was a new one in this country, and the Commissioners found themselves called upon to decide innumerable questions of landscape-gardening, designs, finance, the organization of forces, etc. The board early adopted the principle of conducting its work by its own agents and employees, responsible to itself and under its control, and, in general, work was done in this way and not by contract.

The park as completed was the work of these Com-

missioners, who continued afterwards, while they held office, to develop and improve it and to govern and manage it. They had nothing to do with the small parks of the city, but were Commissioners of the Central Park only. Other public works of very important character were, by various acts of the legislature, from time to time, placed under their direction and control, involving great powers and responsibility and the exercise of great care and judgment. Among such works were the widening and improvement of Sixth and Seventh Avenues, from the north end of the park to the Harlem River, the laying out of St. Nicholas Avenue, and the establishment of the grades of all avenues and streets intersecting these avenues; the improvement of Manhattan Square and Mount Morris Square; the establishment of the grade of Fifth Avenue east and of Eighth Avenue west of the park; the laying out of the Circle at Eighth Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street; the preparation and carrying out of plans for the improvement of all the "West Side" district, from Fifty-ninth to One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street, and for establishing pier and bulkhead lines on the Hudson River between those streets; the laying out of streets and avenues in that part of Manhattan Island which lies north of One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street, and of establishing pier and bulkhead lines there on Spuyten Duyvil Creek and the Harlem River; and the preparation of plans for the improvement of parts of Westchester County, between New York and Yonkers, and for the improvement of the Harlem River and Spuyten Duyvil Creek.

By an act passed in 1859, it was provided that

the board should " consist of not less than seven nor more than eleven members." Changes took place in the membership of the board, from time to time. After 1862 the number of members was always eight. By various acts of the legislature the Commissioners were continued and re-continued in office, with power to fill vacancies in their number. To this circumstance the success of the work undoubtedly is in great part due, as thereby the consistent following of a plan and its harmonious and regular development were secured. Another reason of the great success of this work is that the Commissioners devoted themselves to it. The success of the work itself was made the first and only object. Personal interest and " politics " were kept out. The question of " politics " arose in the beginning of the work, and it was not an easy matter to dispose of, but the board took positive ground in regard to it. In many respects the system of rules for their workingmen, adopted by the Commissioners, is a model for all public work, and in no respect more than as shown in a printed notice entitled " Rights of Men Employed," which was required to be posted on the outside of every tool-cart, and to be read aloud to each gang by its foreman once a fortnight. Under this head the notice read:

" It is entirely contrary to the intention of employing men on the Park that any influence of any sort should be brought to bear upon their political opinions or actions. Officers and foremen on the Park are required, therefore, to abstain from talking with the men upon political topics, and are forbidden to solicit their votes for any person or measure on any pretence whatever. Men are requested to

inform the Superintendent if they are ever told that it is their duty to vote one way or another because they are employed on the Park, or that it is necessary for them to vote one way or another in order to be kept at work on the Park."

And in their final report, in 1870, the then Commissioners (Messrs. Stebbins, Blatchford, Butterworth, Russell, Grinnell, Green and Hutchins) say on this subject:

"At an early period of the work it became apparent to most of the Commissioners that neither economy nor a high degree of efficiency could be secured if the forces in their employ were to be manipulated to subserve the interest of any political party or person. The few attempts that have been made to compulsorily control or direct any portion of this force on any particular political question, or in favor of or against particular men, have been promptly rebuked and frustrated by those in the Commission who have been earnest in the desire that all employees should be entirely free to exercise their political sympathies as seemed best to themselves, without any control whatever of those in authority over them. The Commissioners believe that no work can be either economically or successfully conducted if attention to the work itself is made a secondary consideration to the political ambitions or interests of those who primarily have charge of it. They have steadily adhered to this opinion."

A gentleman, who is well informed as to the events of that time, has recently told the writer of this memoir that, after the first meeting of the Commissioners had adjourned, Mr. Russell was requested to attend a private meeting of several of the

Commissioners who were of the same political party; that Mr. Russell replied that he knew of no reason for such a meeting, and was thereupon told that it was to be held for the purpose of deciding upon appointments to office and employment under the Commission; that he at once said most emphatically that he would attend no such meetings, nor consider any appointments to office or employment upon the ground of politics, nor otherwise than upon the merits and before the full board. It may well be believed that the position thus taken by Mr. Russell at the beginning contributed in great measure to the course which, as the foregoing quotation shows, was subsequently pursued by the board.

With the exception of the treasurer, no member of the board received any compensation for his services. During the thirteen years of their existence as a board, nine and a half millions of dollars passed through their hands. During the entire period of the board's existence Mr. Russell was chairman of the finance committee and a member of the committee on " statuary, fountains and architectural structures," and after 1861 of the executive committee.

In 1870 the " Tweed Ring," then in control of the legislature and of the city government, desiring to secure control of the park and of the great disbursement of money and of the employment of workmen connected with it, procured the abolishment of the board of Commissioners by an act of the legislature passed April fifth, 1870, under the provisions of which the board ceased to exist after April twentieth, 1870. It was succeeded by the newly created " Department of Public Parks." The re-

tirement of the Commissioners caused much disapproval and dissatisfaction in the community. A mass meeting was held, at which resolutions commending the Commissioners and urging the exemption of the Central Park Commission from the scheme of reorganization of the public departments then in progress were adopted; but without effect.[1]

[1] The following is an extract from an editorial article in a New York newspaper of the day:

"The Retiring Park Commissioners.

"Yesterday the members of the old Park Commission retired from their labors and made way for the gentlemen appointed under the new charter to succeed them in their duties. The retiring Commissioners are: Messrs. Henry G. Stebbins, R. M. Blatchford, John F. Butterworth, Charles H. Russell and Waldo Hutchins [also Moses H. Grinnell]. With them has been associated Mr. Andrew H. Green, on whom, as comptroller, has devolved most of the hard work of the Commission, and who, alone, is retained in the new board. The retiring of the other gentlemen whom we have named presents an occasion, not to be neglected, to express what we know to be the universal sentiment of this community, viz.: that no body of public officials have ever in this city performed more perfectly and admirably the work assigned to them; none have furnished more unquestionable examples of official integrity, and none have labored with more manifest and persevering zeal for the public benefit. And for all the time and attention they have bestowed on our most valuable public possession they have received and expected to receive no other reward than the consciousness of duty well performed.

"The transformation of the unsightly wastes which formed the site of the park into the most perfect landscape garden in the world; the thoroughness with which the roads, bridges, sewerage and artificial improvements of the park have been built; the perfect taste which is seen in all of the details of the park; the artistic structures which blend so admirably with its natural features; the efficient yet unobtrusive police regulations which have so nearly prevented all wanton or careless acts of

vandalism; the judicious selections of sites for monumental and other works of art,—these have all cost care, thought, study and time, at the hands of these gentlemen. It is rare at any time, and especially in these times, that the public is served so faithfully by any of its officials. As these real benefactors to our whole community, and to the cause of landscape art in this country generally, are retiring from their voluntary, unpaid and glorious service, ought not the community which has been so nobly served to acknowledge its sense of obligation by some appropriate and worthy testimonial? Who will offer practical suggestions as to the most fitting mode of a recognition which every one would like to see made?"

IX

On the thirteenth of April, 1861, occurred the last in the series of events which brought on the Civil War. On that day, after withstanding as long as possible a heavy bombardment, Major Anderson surrendered Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, to the Confederate forces. The news of the surrender reached New York on the evening of the following day. On the fifteenth of April the President's proclamation was issued, calling for seventy-five thousand militia, and appealing "to all loyal citizens to favor, facilitate and aid this effort to maintain the honor, the integrity and the existence of our National Union and the perpetuity of popular government, and to redress wrongs already long enough endured."

The excitement caused throughout the North was intense, but there was no delay nor indecision in the response of the community. There was what has been rightly called "the uprising of a great people" to defend the integrity of the Union. In the city of New York the leading citizens immediately assembled; adopted resolutions of loyalty to the government, pledging themselves to its assistance; subscribed funds for the equipment of the first regiments of militia, which were hastily hurried forward; made arrangements for taking the unsubscribed balance of the national loan; and called a pub-

lic meeting. The city, which but a few days before had been calm and quiet, given to the pursuits of peace, was now occupied with preparations for war. On Wednesday, the seventeenth of April, two days after the President's proclamation, the Sixth Massachusetts regiment of infantry left Boston for Washington, and early on the following morning marched down Broadway. No one who saw its progress on that morning can ever forget the intense interest of the spectacle as these brave men marched past, on their way to the defence of the Union; and the people, although they little suspected the long and weary struggle of the coming four years, knew that it was on no holiday parade that these men were passing through their city. These soldiers of Massachusetts were worthy representatives of the men who fought the first fight for liberty at Lexington and Concord eighty-six years before. On Friday, the nineteenth of April, the New York Seventh Regiment left New York for Washington, and the ovation which it received on its march through the streets showed the feelings of the citizens. On the following day the "Union mass-meeting" was held in Union Square, and was one of the greatest public meetings ever held in the United States. The entire square was packed with people. From many stands speakers addressed the multitudes, amid demonstrations of interest and patriotism. Through the adjoining streets processions marched carrying the flag of the Union. Resolutions were passed appointing a committee of citizens to receive funds and to act in support of the government.

Mr. Russell was one of those whose names appear

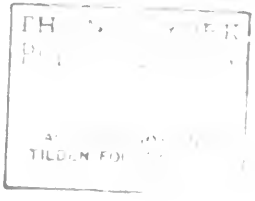
on the call for this meeting, and he was also one of the members of a committee appointed by the meeting, at first known as the " Committee of Safety," and which soon afterwards became known as the " Union Defence Committee of the Citizens of New York." This committee immediately met, and worked by day and by night with the greatest activity. It collected funds, provided uniforms, arms and accoutrements for the New York regiments, aided in their preparations for service and in their proper transportation to the front, and assisted the families of the men who went out in them. In these days, and especially after the experience which a long war gave to the people of this country, it seems extraordinary that a committee of citizens, not holding office, appointed at a popular meeting, should have taken in hand such important public measures. But the emergency was without precedent; the regular army was small and scattered; many of its officers were Southern men; and the first troops available for immediate service in the protection of the capital were the militia of the loyal States. It was in preparing the militia regiments of the city and State of New York for immediate service, and in forwarding them to their destinations, that the great work of the committee was done. The Common Council of the city voted an appropriation of one million dollars, to be paid on the committee's warrants. Steamers were chartered; and, in what seems an incredibly short time, the full number of militia regiments constituting the quota of the State of New York was sent to the front. After the first regiments were sent forward for temporary service, fur-

ther regiments were enlisted " for two years or for the war."

Not only in these ways was the committee working, but also in communication with the governors of other States, in procuring arms and supplies, and in strengthening the hands of the government at a time when its foes were pressing upon it, and when many of these foes were " those of its own household." As has been well said of the committee: " It was for the time being the executive arm of the State and National governments, and gave to the efforts of our citizens the needed method and direction, concentrating the energies of the people, and raising them to the highest grade of efficiency." The energetic action of the committee reflected the spirit of nearly all classes of the citizens of New York. There probably was never a greater instance of the public spirit and patriotism of a community than the action of the merchants and bankers of New York. Having especially to dread the consequences of war, they nevertheless immediately took the most decided action to strengthen the government and to support it. On the nineteenth of April, 1861, four days after the President's proclamation was issued, the New York Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution recommending a blockade of the Southern ports. The seriousness of the struggle and the necessity for decided action were realized by the patriotic citizens of New York long before they appear to have been fully understood by the authorities at Washington. A prompt and earnest prosecution of the war was urged by them, while the high officials at Washington

CHARLES H. RUSSELL

1860



were still hoping for an amicable settlement, were fearful of driving the South into greater excesses, and were doubtful whether the North would approve of positive measures.

Mr. Russell, with Messrs. Richards, Astor, McCurdy, Draper, Sloan, Blatchford and Low, as a sub-committee of the Union Defence Committee, went to Washington in May, to urge the acceptance by the government of fourteen additional regiments from the State of New York, to be selected by the Union Defence Committee, to serve during the war, and to be sent forward at once. The sub-committee was received by President Lincoln and had an interview with him, at which were present all the members of the Cabinet. Considerable doubt was expressed by members of the Cabinet as to whether the government could raise the money, or depend upon popular support, to justify it in using so many more troops. One of the Cabinet officers expressed the opinion that if the military forces were increased the bonds of the government would fall to fifty cents on the dollar. The chairman of the committee called upon Mr. Russell to give his views upon that point—*i. e.*, as to whether the government could depend upon financial support and maintain its credit. Mr. Russell said to the President that the committee had come to talk plain English—("Well," said Mr. Lincoln, "that's what I like");—that war was actually upon the country; that it was necessary to put down the rebellion; that what the credit of the country should be, depended not upon Wall Street, but upon the action of the government, and in great measure upon what the administration should that day de-

cide to do; that, if the government should show itself prompt and energetic in taking the necessary steps to put down the rebellion, it need have no fear as to its credit, nor as to its receiving all the financial support it needed. The day was won; the fourteen additional regiments were accepted; and a day or two afterwards Mr. Russell received, at New York, the following letter from the President:

"(Private.)

"WASHINGTON, D. C., May 16, 1861.

"MY DEAR SIR: Learning to-day from Gov. Seward that the order you have for forwarding the fourteen regiments has something in it for the Governor to do in the case, I am alarmed lest a see-sawing commences, by which neither your troops nor the Governor's will get along in any reasonable time. Now, I want you to cut the knots, and send them right along, five regiments here and nine to Fort Sumpter,[1] just as understood when we parted.

"Yours very truly,

"A. LINCOLN.

"C. H. RUSSELL, ESQ."

To this letter Mr. Russell replied that he was requested by the committee to say that the President's instructions would be fully carried out, and that five of the regiments would be sent to Washington and nine to Fortress Monroe, with all the despatch possible.[2]

[1] An error for Fortress Monroe.

[2] A copy of "Lincoln: Passages from his Speeches and Letters. With an introduction by Richard Watson Gilder" was received by the writer of this memoir, upon the day following

The most important work of the Union Defence Committee was completed by July, 1861, although considerable work was done as late as November of that year. By that time the State and National governments were competent to attend properly to such matters as in the first emergency were attended to by the committee.

While the committee, as such, did little work after 1861, yet on several occasions it was called together after that year, during the continuance of the war, and was never formally dissolved, although it practically had no existence after 1865. Mr. Russell continued to be a member of it during its entire existence, and was the chairman of the finance committee, and as such *ex officio* a member of the executive committee.[1]

"Lincoln's Birthday," in 1903, accompanied by the following lines:

"I give this book, in token, to the son
Of him who was a type of those brave souls
Who, when dire trouble fell upon the land,
From the beginning saw the fateful end,
Bending strong backs to the tremendous strain.
Higher than knighthood's honor lives your line,
For that the mighty Lincoln hurriedly called
To your true sire, in a perilous hour,
And got true answer,—succor swift, complete.
On such as he the patient President,
The tender, elder brother of us all,
The sad, wise leader, leaned, and not in vain.
Therefore the nation lives, therefore shall live,
Inheriting the spirit of great days.

R. W. Gilder.

New York, February 12th, 1903."

[1] See "The Union Defence Committee of the City of New York, Minutes, Reports, and Correspondence, with an Historical Introduction," by John Austin Stevens, 1885.

The excitements of the years of the Civil War have long since passed, but the trials and anxieties of those days should not be unknown to the descendants of those who bore them. There was hardly a home in the North which had not a husband, father, son, or other near relative in the field or at sea, in the service of the Union. Mr. Russell's nephew Harry, the son of his brother William, was in the army, as aide-de-camp to General Hooker; and Mrs. Russell's only brother, Joseph Howland, a man of the noblest type of Christian soldier and gentleman, went to the front as adjutant of the Sixteenth New York Regiment, of which later he became colonel, was severely wounded, and was brevetted brigadier-general. Colonel Henry Sturgis Russell, of Boston, a grandson of the Hon. Jonathan Russell, served throughout the war, and was a very distinguished and gallant officer. The ladies of Mr. Russell's family, in common with hundreds of other loyal women, were constantly occupied in making clothing for the soldiers, in sending them delicacies, and in the work of the Sanitary Commission; and the children assisted in making lint and in such other ways as they were able.

The home on the corner of Great Jones Street and Broadway was in the midst of active scenes in the early months of the war. In February, 1861, on his way to Washington to be inaugurated as President of the United States, Mr. Lincoln, passing through New York, drove down Broadway with uncovered head, through the undemonstrative crowds, which looked at him with interest, but without enthusiasm, little realizing the great events to come in which he

was to be the greatest figure. In Great Jones Street, near Mr. Russell's house, was a restaurant called "The Palmetto," and in front of it was placed as a sign a palmetto tree. When Fort Sumter was fired upon, the people tore down this tree, the palmetto being the emblem of the State of South Carolina.

The Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, on the morning of April 18, 1861, when the tramp of its marching men broke the stillness, halted at this corner, and the people from the houses near by brought out food and fruit to the soldiers; and all through those exciting days, by day and by night, the regiments from New York and other States, on their way to the front, passed by the house; and often the commanding officers, seeing Mr. Russell at his window and knowing him from his prominence in the work of the Union Defence Committee, saluted him as they passed. Constantly through the streets, to the sound of the drum and fife, went the recruiting parties. When the Seventh Regiment of New York left for Washington, the windows of the house were crowded with friends who had come there to see the march of this command, which contained a large number of the best-known young men of the city. When Major Anderson came North after the surrender of Fort Sumter, he dined one Sunday afternoon with Mr. Russell; and when, after dinner, Mr. Russell took him in his carriage to drive him to his hotel, a crowd surrounded the carriage and cheered this gallant officer. A club of young ladies, of which Miss Fanny Russell was a member, met at Mr. Russell's house, and made the havelocks for the officers and men of the Third Regiment of New York Volun-

teers. Besides the part which he took in the work of the Union Defence Committee, Mr. Russell was active in many other ways in support of the government, during the years of the war, wherever opportunity could be found. He was on intimate terms with the President, with Mr. Stanton, Secretary of War, with Mr. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, and with the leaders of the Republican party in both houses of Congress; and in the consideration of matters affecting the finances and credit of the government he was frequently consulted by them. Throughout the whole period of the war, even in the dark days when defeat in the field and enmity abroad made loyal hearts doubt as to the result, he never for a moment lost courage; and at all times, by his language and example, he inspired patriotism in others and maintained their confidence in the final triumph of the Union cause.[1]

Mr. Russell was one of a committee of thirteen gentlemen appointed at a public meeting held in Wall Street on April fifteeenth, 1865, the day of the death of President Lincoln, to attend and represent the city of New York at the funeral ceremonies in Washington. The committee did so, and afterwards was received by the new President, Andrew Johnson.

[1] " In that anxious hour he obeyed the calls of patriotism with such alacrity and earnestness as to make strangers desirous of his friendship, and friends proud of him as a fellow-countryman. Until the end of that contest, in his private capacity and as a member of the Union Defence Committee, he continued to contribute his time and means to the support of the government and its measures." (Extract from a memorial notice of Mr. Russell read at a meeting of the New York Historical Society and recorded in its minutes, February 5, 1884.)

X

The Bank of Commerce was a large purchaser of United States government securities during the early years of the Civil War. As investments these purchases proved profitable, but that such would be the case could not be foreseen at that time; and the action of the bank in making them, and its influence and leadership in the combined action of itself and other banks and individuals in the cities of New York, Boston and Philadelphia in subscribing to government loans, were of great public importance and benefit in sustaining the national credit and in securing to the government the necessary means for the prosecution of the war.

In December, 1860, no provision had been made by the authorities at Washington for the payment of the interest on the public debt falling due on the first of January, 1861. This was within a few weeks after the election of Mr. Lincoln. The treasonable movements of the secessionists, some of whom filled high office under the government, and their plots to embarrass it, were already becoming known; and no confidence was felt in the administration of President Buchanan. Under authority of an Act of Congress passed December seventeenth, 1860, the Secretary of the Treasury on December eighteenth called for subscriptions to a loan of $5,000,000, for which treasury notes were to be issued. The bids received up to December twenty-eighth, 1860, when bids were

opened, amounted to less than $2,500,000. The Bank of Commerce, for itself and others, had bid for one million and a half of this amount. Of the total bids the Secretary of the Treasury accepted $1,831,000, including the $1,500,000 of the Bank of Commerce, leaving still needed $3,169,000. Mr. Russell was very instrumental in raising the subscription of $1,500,000 made by the Bank of Commerce for itself and others, and was himself a subscriber to the extent of one hundred thousand dollars. As it seemed to be improbable that the government would succeed in raising the entire amount needed, Mr. Russell and Mr. John J. Cisco, the latter then the Assistant Treasurer of the United States at New York, together telegraphed to the Secretary of the Treasury, asking whether he would allow the subscribers to the $1,500,000 to take the balance of the loan on the same terms, but not making a bid. The Secretary construed their communication as being a bid, and replied that their offer was accepted. Mr. Russell accepted the situation; and the balance of the loan of $5,000,000 was then, chiefly by his influence and exertions, immediately made up by the Bank of Commerce and other subscribers, and the necessary means were thus provided for the payment of the interest. The emergency was a dangerous and a critical one to the country, and it was met, in the only way in which it could properly be met, by keen appreciation of the situation and by sound judgment and courage. The Secretary of the Treasury at this time was Philip F. Thomas, who succeeded Howell Cobb, and held office from December twelfth, 1860, to January eleventh, 1861, at which time John A.

Dix was made Secretary and held office until the close of President Buchanan's administration. General Dix's appointment gave great satisfaction and restored confidence in financial circles; and at a meeting of New York bank officers and directors held at the Bank of Commerce a resolution approving the appointment, moved by Mr. Russell and seconded by Moses Taylor, was adopted.[1]

Subsequently, from time to time, large temporary advances were made to the government by the banks, in which the Bank of Commerce and several of its directors joined liberally. But these measures were only temporary; and after the passage of the acts of Congress of July seventeenth and August fifth, 1861, providing for a national loan of not exceeding $250,000,000, the banks of the cities of New York, Boston and Philadelphia advanced to the government the sum of $150,000,000, for which were issued treasury notes bearing seven and three-tenths per cent. interest, commonly known as the "seven thirties," and six-per-cent. twenty-year bonds. Of this amount the proportion of the New York banks was $105,000,000, and the contribution of the Bank of Commerce was of over fourteen millions of dollars.

In the year 1865 the Bank of Commerce became a national bank, under the provisions of the National Bank Act of 1864. The bank had been of great service to the government during the war. In addition to its subscriptions to government loans and its aid to the government in the maintenance of the public credit, it had in many special matters been of great public service. These circumstances,

[1] "Memoirs of John A. Dix," by Morgan Dix, Vol. I, p. 363.

and the high position and influence of the bank and of its board of directors, and the further fact that at that time the bank had the largest capital and surplus of any bank in the country, made the government especially desirous that the Bank of Commerce should become a national bank under the new law. By the original articles of association of the Bank of Commerce it was provided (as permitted by the General Banking Act of 1838) that there should be no individual liability of stockholders for the contracts, debts or engagements of the association. The National Bank Act provided for the individual liability of stockholders in national banks to an amount equal to the par value of their shares. The directors of the Bank of Commerce, while willing that it should become a national bank, were unwilling to surrender the stockholders' freedom from liability; but the provision above mentioned of the National Bank Act was an essential element of the proposed new system of banking and one that as a general principle could not be abandoned. The administration and the leaders of the majority in Congress were anxious to meet the wishes of the Bank of Commerce upon this point; and the matter was finally settled by the adoption of a general provision exempting from individual liability the stockholders of any bank at that time existing under State laws, having not less than $5,000,000 of capital actually paid in and a surplus equal to twenty per cent. of such capital on hand, such surplus to be kept unimpaired, and always to be maintained in addition to the twenty per cent. surplus to be accumulated and maintained by all national banks, as otherwise pro-

vided by the act. This exception covered the case of the Bank of Commerce; and the bank thereupon, in 1865, was converted into a national bank. Mr. Russell was the chairman of the committee to take the necessary steps to effect the conversion, after it had been decided upon, toward the end of 1864. He went several times to Washington, during and after the session of Congress, and it was in great degree due to his efforts that the act was so amended, before its final passage, as to secure to the stockholders of the Bank of Commerce the freedom from individual liability which they enjoy.

On the fifth of March, 1866, at the earnest request of his associates, Mr. Russell accepted the office of president of the bank, upon the retirement of Mr. John A. Stevens. This position he held until June fifth, 1868, when he resigned it. He never had any wish to hold this office, but assumed it, with public spirit, at a period when it was considered desirable in the interests of the bank that he should do so.

Upon Mr. Russell's retirement from the presidency, in June, 1868, the capital and surplus and reserved profits of the bank amounted to over $14,000,000. During all the time of his presidency dividends at the rate of ten per cent. per annum were paid on ten millions of capital, and the surplus and reserved profits on hand, as shown by the annual statements, increased from $2,878,117.57 in 1866, to $3,661,754.01 in 1868. In the present day of aggregations of capital and of great financial transactions, these figures do not seem so remarkable and exceptional as they undoubtedly were in the years

from 1866 to 1868. The number of shareholders in May, 1868, was 2280. Under the National Bank Act the bank was entitled to a note circulation of $6,000,000. Its capital was larger than that of any other bank in the United States. Only one other bank had a capital even one-half so large. The directors of the Bank of Commerce during Mr. Russell's presidency were Messrs. George T. Adee, John Jacob Astor, Denning Duer, John C. Green, Robert Lenox Kennedy, A. A. Low, Edwin D. Morgan, Adam Norrie, Robert Ray, Joseph Sampson, John A. Stevens and R. Warren Weston. Mr. Russell's portrait, painted by Huntington in 1880, hangs in the president's room in the offices of the bank.[1]

[1] At a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Bank of Commerce in New York, held on Tuesday, January 22, 1884, the President having formally announced the death of Mr. Charles H. Russell, who was the earliest and oldest member of the board, it was, on motion,

Resolved, That the following minute be entered at length on our book of records, and that a copy of the same be sent to the family of the deceased, with the tender of our sincere and heartfelt sympathy:

In Memoriam.

The announcement of the death, last evening, of our venerable and honored associate and friend Mr. Charles H. Russell, in his eighty-eighth year, has touched the feelings of all present most profoundly.

The Christian faith which he cherished and which we hold does not permit us to mourn an event which has liberated his spirit from its earthly body and translated it to a higher state of being; for the years of his life were many, and the infirmities of age pressed heavily upon him. We measure the greatness of our loss rather by the recollection of what he was in the vigor of his manhood. We recall the fact that he was one of the founders of this institution, and that during the whole time of its existence under its original title he was a steadfast, con-

On May twelfth, 1870, Mr. Russell presided as chairman at a large public meeting held in the Cooper Institute, in New York, to favor the ratification by the United States Senate of the treaty

scientious, and faithful Director; and when in the progress of political events it became desirable to change from a state to a national institution, Mr. Russell was actively instrumental in having the law so passed by Congress as to secure our stockholders from all personal responsibility, as required by their first articles of association.

In 1866 he succeeded Mr. Stevens as President of the Bank, continuing in charge until 1868, when he resigned.

From the first establishment of the Bank in 1839, Mr. Russell manifested a lively interest in its management, which to the end of his life never languished.

In every time of crisis, and more especially when civil war imperilled the finances of the country and even the existence of the government, he was always at the front, animating by his presence and guiding by his counsel. With every new emergency, with every new call for pecuniary aid from the Secretary of the Treasury, he was prompt to enforce the suggestions of the highest patriotism.

And so it was that, whenever financial measures were under consideration in Congress, his thoughts were always turned to the solution of problems which perplex the minds of so many of our public men; and he was ever ready to give to our national and state legislators the benefit of his wise suggestions, the result of his mature reflection.

As a member of the "Union Defence Committee" he was one of those who were most efficient in sending succor to the troops that hastened to the front, and in subsequent efforts for an active prosecution of the war.

Mr. Russell had closed his business career before he came to be known to most of the present members of the Board, retiring with an ample fortune and the reputation of an honorable and upright merchant. Into all the various corporate institutions and public associations with which he was connected he carried a dignified deportment, a natural sagacity, and a ripeness of judgment which made him a most welcome and valued coadjutor in the transaction of affairs.

for the acquisition of the Bay of Samana and adjacent territory on the island of Santo Domingo. His friend from boyhood, Moses H. Grinnell, in proposing Mr. Russell's name for election as chairman of the meeting, referred to him as " a gentleman who is identified with the city of New York for thirty-five years as a merchant, and for ten years as the leader and head of the Bank of Commerce, a man well known throughout the land, a man who assumes no position without consideration and reflection." The Senate refused to ratify the treaty.

This is not the time for an elaborate exposition of his useful life. We have all seen him in the home of his affections, where a kind and genial courtesy imparted to his generous hospitality its highest charm. Many of us have followed him, year by year, to his summer retreat, where hosts of friends have been accustomed to surround him under the shadow of the trees which his hands had planted and whose growth he had watched with unceasing pleasure; and not a few of us have beheld him with his eyes closed to the light of day, standing amid the scenes which once delighted his vision, serene and cheerful, calmly awaiting the call which he has so recently answered.

It shall be our privilege to embalm the memory of our late associate and friend and preserve it for our successors, with the memory of others who have gone before, who stood the highest in our love and esteem.

XI

Mr. Russell always had great affection for Newport, the place of his birth. As early as 1836 he passed the summer there with his family, and from that year until his death Newport was his summer residence.

In 1836 he bought a large tract of land there, including the property which afterwards was known as " Oaklawn." In 1853 the " Oaklawn " house was finished and first occupied by him; and it was enlarged in 1862. Every tree upon the grounds was planted under his direction; and this place, which he loved so well, each year increased in beauty and attractiveness under his care and attention. It was a constant source of interest and pleasure to him. He made a thorough study of trees and fruits and flowers, and was very happy and successful in their cultivation. He lived to see his trees grown to large size and much beauty, under the care which he gave to them, aided by the favorable climate of Newport. " Oaklawn " was, above every other spot, his home and the home of his family; and many of the dearest memories of his surviving children centre there. It was a well-known place in the history of Newport, during the thirty years from 1853 to 1883; and was the scene of constant hospitality and many entertainments. Many of the men best known in the history of our country during those years, and distinguished

foreigners, were guests under its roof. In the later years, the garden-parties, at which the company gathered on the broad lawns, were celebrated among the entertainments of Newport.

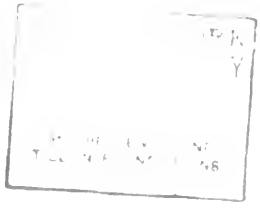
On March seventh, 1863, Mrs. Russell died, leaving six little children. Mr. Russell's only children who are living at this time are the children of his second marriage, who knew their mother only in the time of their early childhood. To this day, her friends tell them, as their father did, of the beauty of her life and character.

After the death of Mrs. Russell, Miss Fanny Russell assumed the care of her younger brothers and sisters, to whom and to her father she devoted the rest of her life. As the head of her father's house, she presided at the many gatherings which took place under his roof in New York and at "Oaklawn"; she was his constant companion, and the devoted sister of her younger brothers and sisters, to whom she gave the care of a mother; she was loved and admired by all who knew her, and was distinguished wherever she went by the dignity and refinement of her bearing and the gentleness and charm of her character. She died in 1885.[1]

[1] "Fanny Geraldine Russell, who died on the second instant, was the daughter of Charles Handy Russell and Ann Rodman Russell, and was born in the city of New York, March 10, 1836. Both the parents of Miss Russell were from colonial Newport families, and she from her early youth spent much of her time in her father's family in this city, to which place she was strongly attached, and in the community she had many friends who were strongly attached to her. Miss Russell was a lady of extraordinary endowments; so much purity of mind and heart, so much amiability and intelligence, with so much energy and practical wisdom as she possessed, are rarely combined in the

CHARLES H. RUSSELL

1882



Mr. Russell passed the last twenty years of his life about equally in each year in New York and at "Oaklawn." In 1869 he again visited Europe. He continued to be a director or trustee of several institutions. To the last days of his life his mind was never idle. Even when, with advancing years, he was no longer able to be physically active, he was alert and interested in all the questions of the day. He was constantly consulted upon matters of public interest; and probably there was no one of his day more generally honored and respected than he was in the community in which he lived.

He was very fond of conversation, full of reminiscences of people and events, and unhesitating in the expression of his opinions and beliefs. His wide experience and knowledge of men and affairs made his opinions interesting and valuable. The

formation of a single character. With the most cultivated classes in society she was always a coveted guest, and in the homes of the poor and friendless her presence was a benefaction. Her countenance was radiant of goodness, and an evil thought, or word, would appear to be an intruder to be banished from, if it ever entered, her presence. Her best eulogy is contained in the simple declaration made by one who had faithfully served the Russell family for twenty years. He said: 'I have seen Miss Fanny under almost all circumstances since I have been with the family, and I never heard her say a word, even to a servant, or saw her do a thing unbecoming a perfect lady, and that is more than I can say of any other person I ever knew.' She was well known and highly appreciated by a great many people of distinction throughout the country, many of whom she had met at the hospitable board of her father, over which she had presided from the death of her stepmother. Miss Russell will be greatly missed in Newport, not only in fashionable society, but by the poor, to whom her death will be both a cause for sorrow and a deprivation of comforts." (From the "Newport Daily News," April 6, 1885.)

long period covered by his active life and by his recollections made him seem to be a connecting link with the century in which he was born; and it was always extremely interesting, especially in the later years of his life, to hear him speak, from personal knowledge, of the men and deeds of past generations.

The names of the men who were his friends are so numerous that a list of them would be too long to place upon the pages of this memoir. Many of the men best known in our history in politics, commerce and literature, during the fifty years before his death, were among his friends.

He regarded the social side of life as one of its duties. It was always his opinion that a man engaged in active business should each day, upon leaving his office, leave his business there behind him and not bring it into his home and family life, and that he should have a full and stimulating life and interests outside of his business.

Nothing was more characteristic of him than his impatience and contempt of anything which seemed to him small or mean. His own nature was so far above anything of that kind that it is impossible to think of him in connection with anything selfish or petty. His appearance and manner were full of dignity, and inspired respect. His personality is a charming one to recall, whether it be in the public walks of life or in his home: a strong and wise and honorable man, a dignified and courteous gentleman, a good friend, and a devoted husband and father.

He was always a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was a regular attendant of its

services at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York and at old Trinity Church in Newport, which was endeared to him by family associations of several generations.

Until the eighty-fourth year of his life he had excellent health, and his years seemed to have made no impression upon him. In that year he had a severe illness, and soon afterwards almost entirely lost his sight, which he never regained, and he was somewhat lame from the effects of a fall; but otherwise his health was unaffected, and his last years were passed with undiminished interest in the many subjects which always interested him, and with keen enjoyment of the society of his family and friends. His mental faculties and cheerfulness of spirit never were impaired; and he died on the twenty-first of January, 1884, in his eighty-eighth year, after a short and painless illness.

This sketch of his life has not been written as a tribute of respect to his memory. As such it would be far from adequate or worthy. It has been written simply to give his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, most of whom never knew him, some knowledge of the part which he took in the affairs of his time and of his honorable and useful life, in order that they may hold that knowledge as a valued possession and as an inspiration in their own lives.